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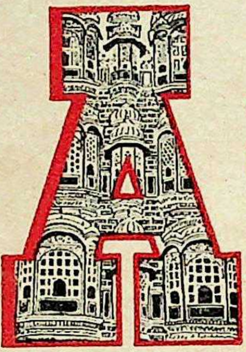
5000 YEARS OF



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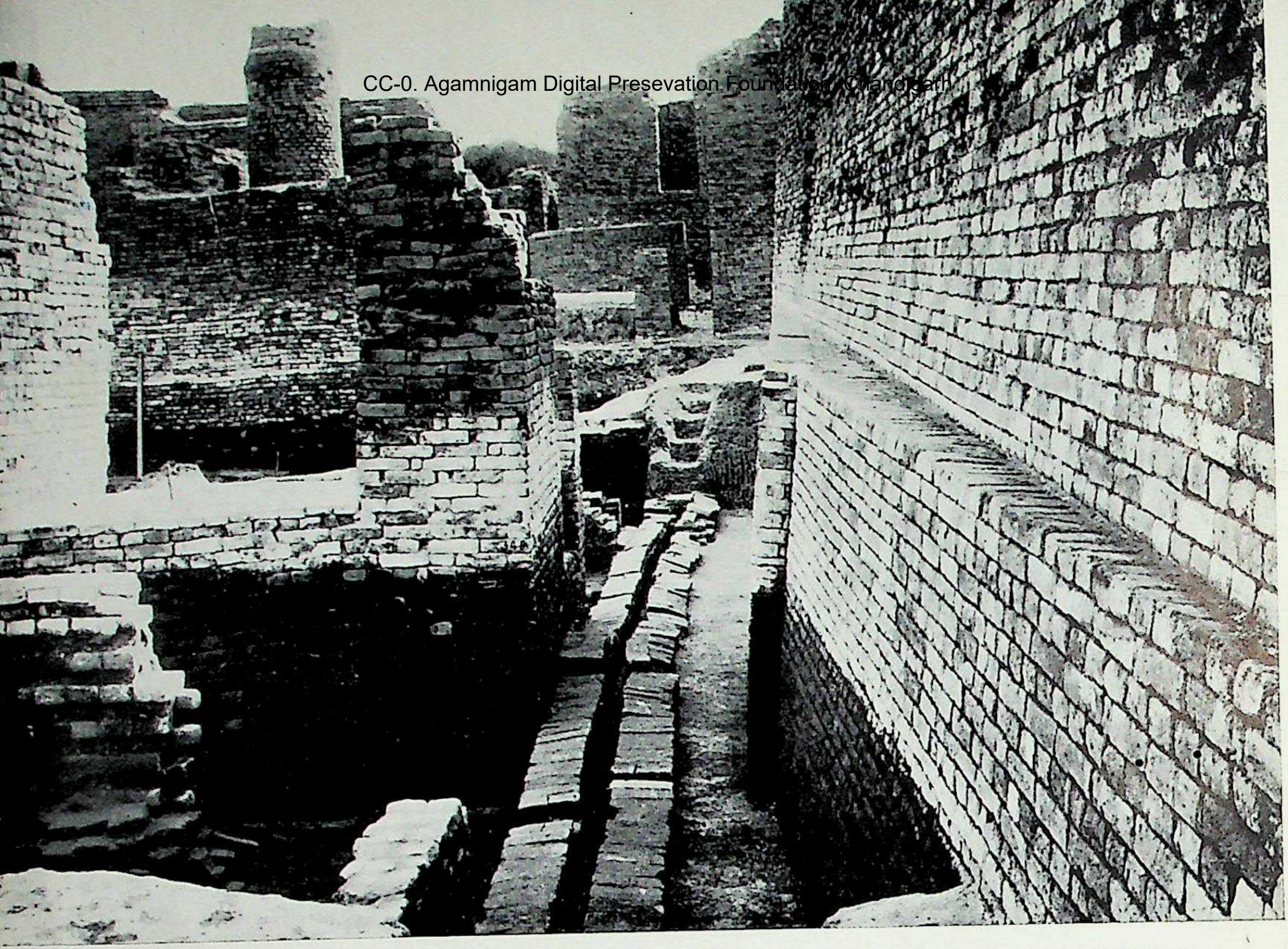

1
A view of the drain, Mohenjodaro

5000 Years of Indian Architecture

PERHAPS no branch of human culture reflects with greater exactitude the progress or decadence of man than architecture. In the progress of architecture from the most primitive types of human habitation to magnificent temples and palaces we can discover the ceaseless effort of man to express his social and religious environment and his attitude towards life. In the development of architecture we can also detect the aesthetic taste which actuated man to combine beauty with utility. The progress of Indian architecture from the primitive to the sophisticated was no exception to this historical process.

The earliest phase of Indian architecture may be seen from the remains of the ancient cities of the Indus Valley culture datable to *c.* 3000 B.C. From the excavated remains at Mohenjodaro in Sind and Harappa in the Punjab it is evident that the Indian cities at that early period were scientifically laid. There were broad roads and smaller lanes with shops and booths. The houses were probably of one storey or more, an upper storey being made of wood. The roofs were of stamped clay. Practically every house had a bathroom which was always placed on the street side of the building for the convenient disposal of water. There was adequate arrangement for drainage (Fig. 1). A brick-lined channel flowed down every street and into this main drain ran smaller tributary drains from the houses on either side. Another important feature of the drainage system was the provision of the large brick culverts with corbelled roofs built on the outskirts of the city to carry away storm water. The houses were also provided with brick-lined walls (Fig. 2).

At Harappa the remains of a structure has twelve parallel walls. We are unable to determine the exact significance of this structure, but it might have been a gigantic storehouse (Figs. 3 & 4). At Mohenjodaro some buildings with cup-like depressions at street corners were probably in the nature of restaurants, their depressions serving as receptacles for large jars of liquid.

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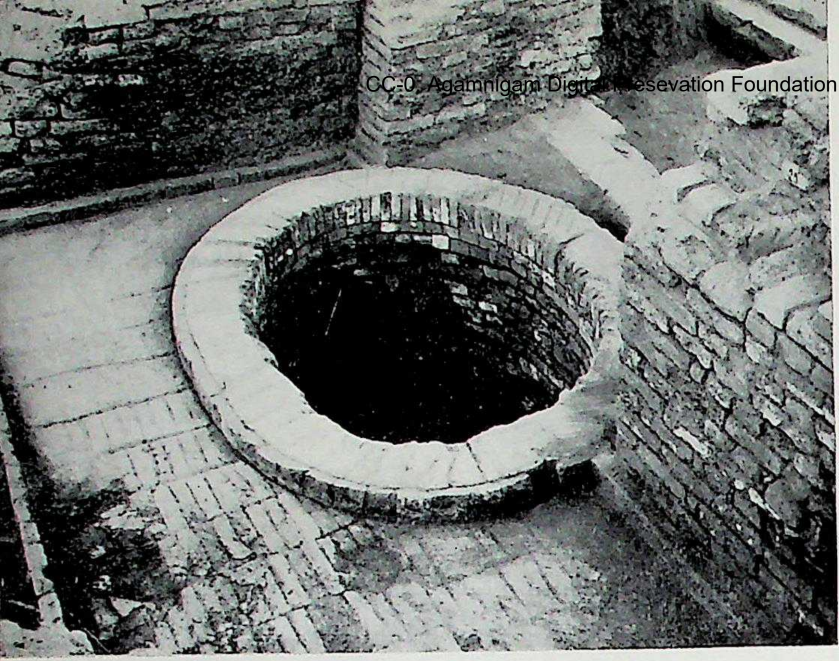
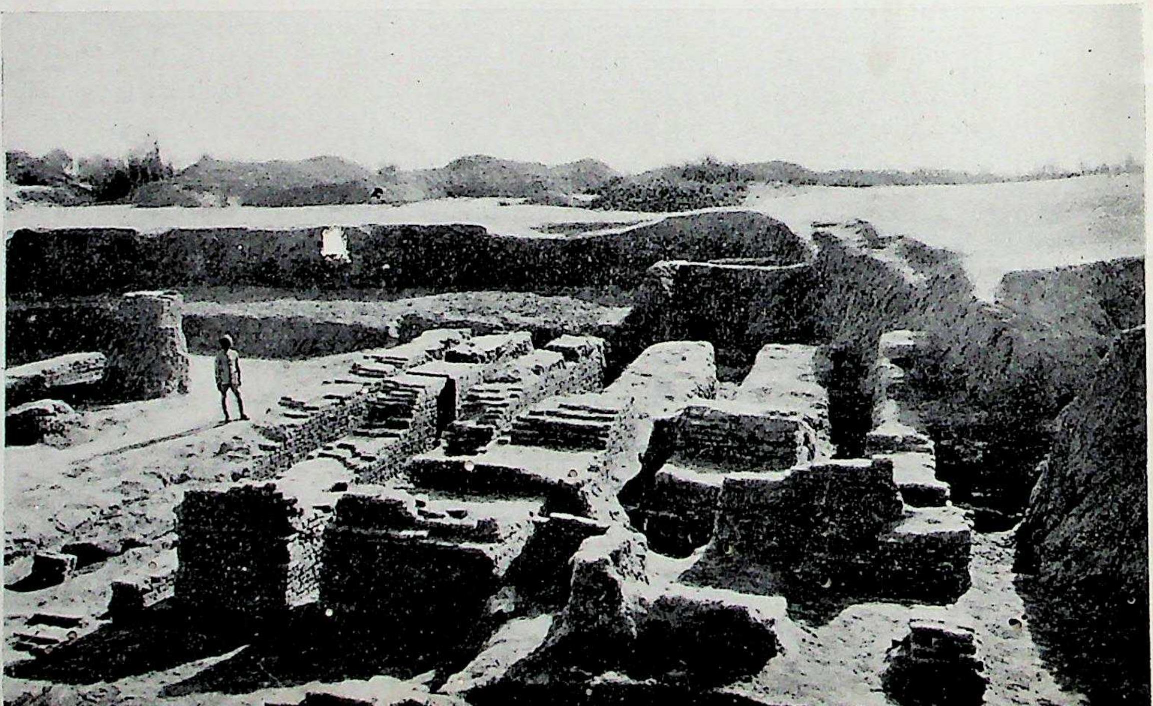


2
A close view of a well, Mohenjodaro

3 & 4
Remains of a structure with 12 parallel walls, Harappa

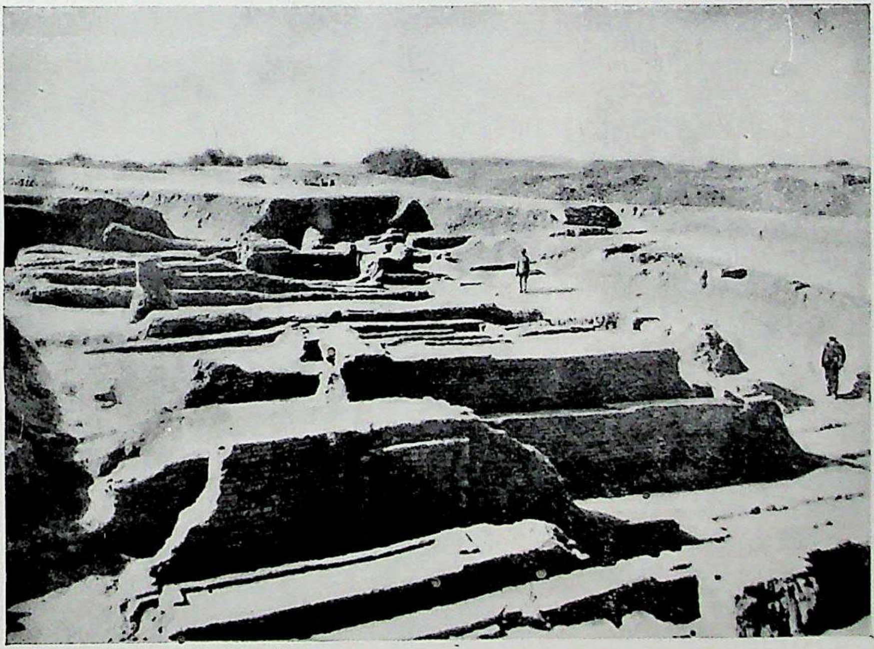


One of the most important constructions at Mohenjodaro is the large bath built entirely of burnt bricks which could be entered at either end by means of a staircase (Fig. 5). The broad walk at the top of the bath rested on cells filled with clay. There were walls with openings which provided access to a cloistered walk running round the bath. The eight bathrooms, to the north of the bath, were provided with stairways probably leading to an upper storey. The exact significance of this great bath and smaller baths has not yet been discovered, but it is probable that bathing was a ritual with the people of Mohenjodaro.

The history of Indian architecture between the Indus Valley period, which came to an end sometime in the 2nd millennium B.C., and the 4th century B.C. is very meagre. We have to depend entirely on literature to fill up this gap. From the Vedic evidence it seems possible that the idea of fortified town was adopted by the Vedic Aryans from their Dasa enemies, though it is yet difficult to connect these Dasas with the Indus Valley people.

The Vedic house was not a very elaborate affair and the people lived mostly in thatched houses with several rooms. The house was often provided with a central hall and several other rooms which served for storing and living purposes.

Vedic literature again refers to funerary mounds which in the form of stupas at a later period played an important part in the history of Indian architecture.



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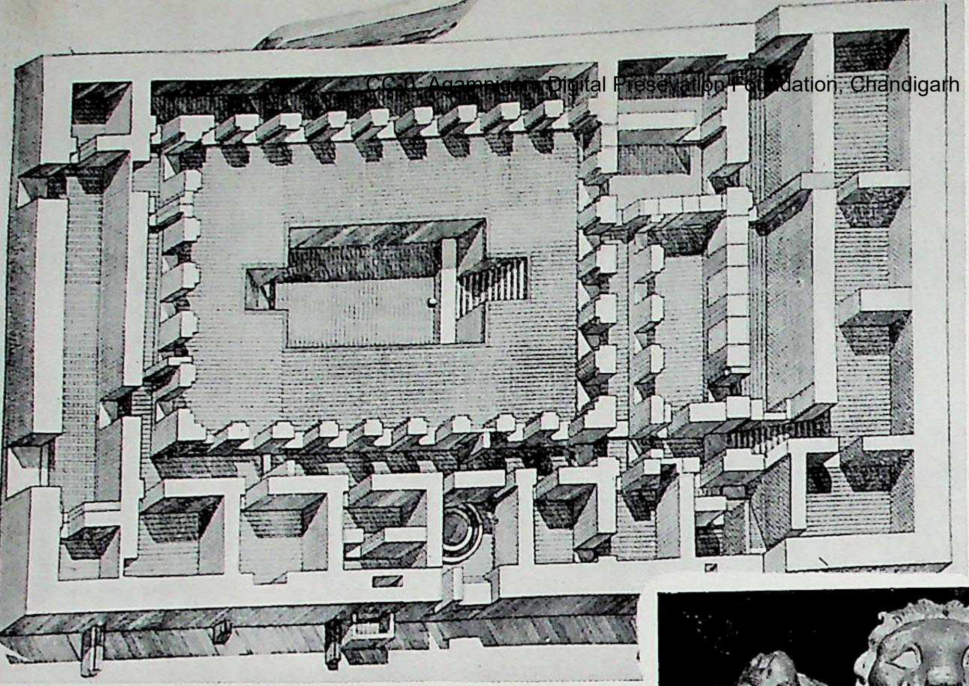
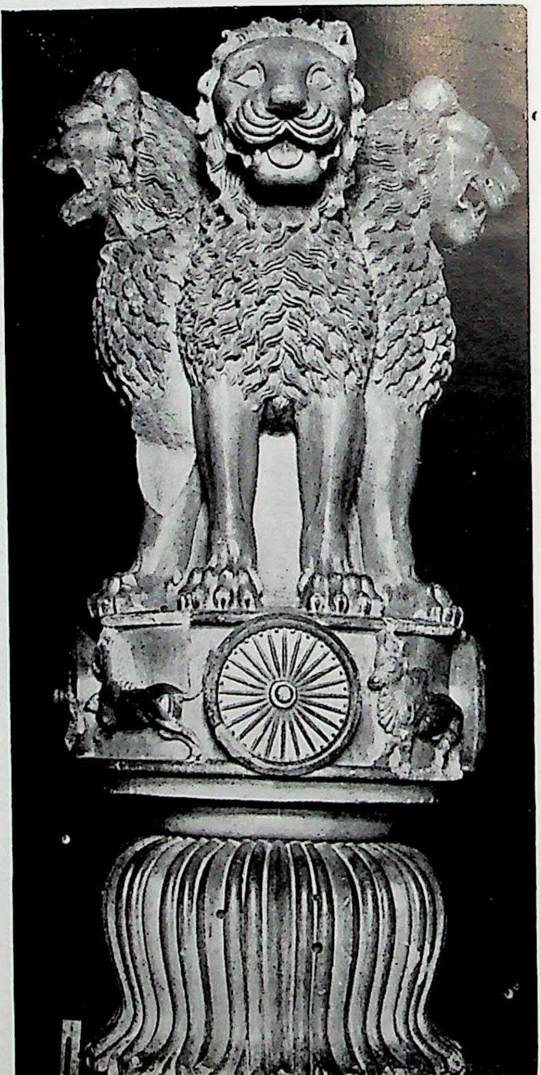


5
Isometric projection of the Great Bath, Mohenjodaro

In the epics and Buddhist literature references are made to well-built cities and sumptuous palaces. These cities and palaces seem to have followed the same plan as that of the city of Pataliputra which, according to Megasthenes, occupied a narrow parallelogram and was provided with stupendous palisades with loopholes for archers There was a deep moat around it. The ramparts had as many as sixty-four gates. The royal palace was a spacious building the main part of which consisted of a series of hypostyle halls.

The architecture of the Asokan period (*c.* 274-237 B.C.) gains in magnificence as for the first time stone was employed instead of wood. The great art of the Asokan period is mainly represented by the monolithic pillars on which edicts were engraved. The famous capital of the Sarnath pillar consists of four



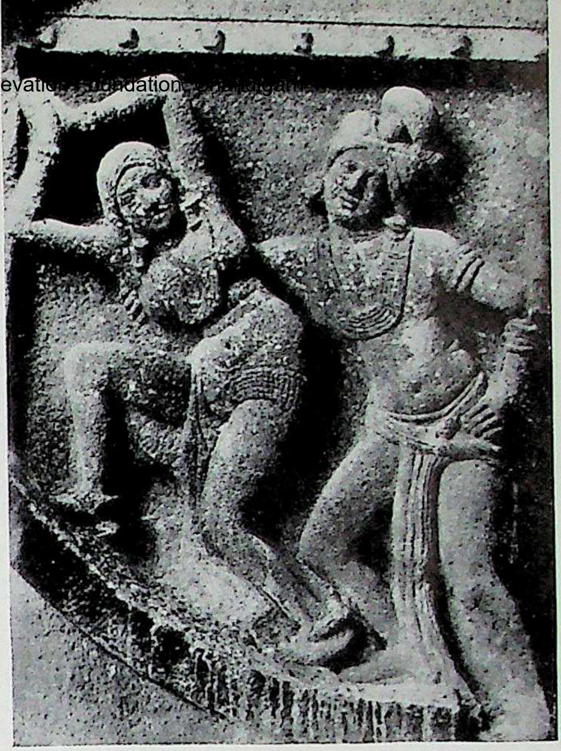
6
Sarnath Lion Capital

addorsed lions which originally supported the Wheel of Law resting on the abacus bearing in relief an elephant, a horse, a bull and a lion (Fig. 6). In other extant examples the crowning member consisted of a bull, horse, elephant or wheel. The pillars were highly polished. There are also excavated halls of the Asokan period in the Barabar hills. Of the latter the Sudama cave consists of a circular chamber and an antechamber with side entrances. The remains of Asoka's palace at Pataliputra show that it was planned on the model of pillared halls of the Achaemenid kings of Persepolis.

Indian architecture between 200 B.C. and 20 A.D. continued to maintain the progress made in the Asokan period. The improvement in the cave architecture may be seen in the old Vihara at Bhaja near Poona (Fig. 7) datable to 2nd century B.C. or later. It is remarkable for its unique reliefs, one of them being identified by Dr Coomaraswamy as Indra riding his Airavata. Bedsa and other caves near Poona in the same period consist of a nave, apse and aisle; the apse containing a solid stupa and the aisle continuing round the apse thus providing the circumambulation path.

The Chaitya hall at Karle, which may be dated to the beginning of the Christian era, is a magnificent example of cave architecture (Fig. 8). Its horseshoe windows, great pillars and finely carved relief win our admiration.

The remains of the railings and gateways of the Bharhut stupa may be dated back to *c.* 150 B.C. The railing pillars and the gateways are decorated with the figures of the guardian Yakshas and Yakshis, Nagarajas, birth-stories of the Buddha, floral, animal and other motifs (Fig. 9). The Buddha himself does not appear and the chief events in his life are represented by symbols.



7

From the cave temple of Bhaja

There was a special type of temple connected with the Bodhi-tree at Gaya. On the strength of certain reliefs ranging from the 2nd century B.C. to 2nd century A.D. it could be said that this temple was made of a gallery with vaulted roof and Chaitya windows of the usual type supported by pillars and with the ground plan like a Maltese cross.

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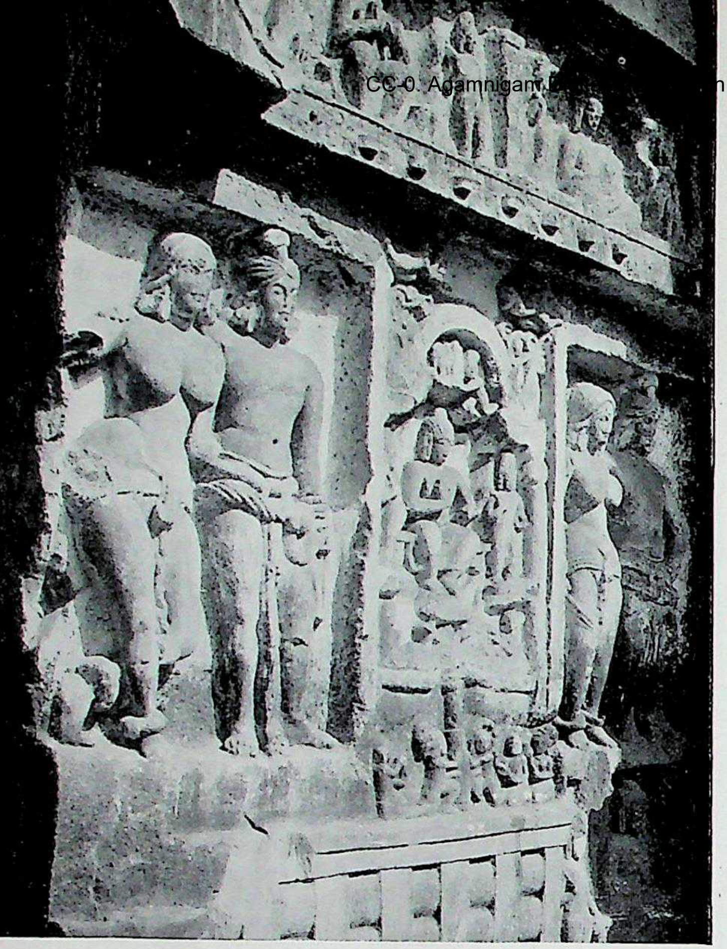
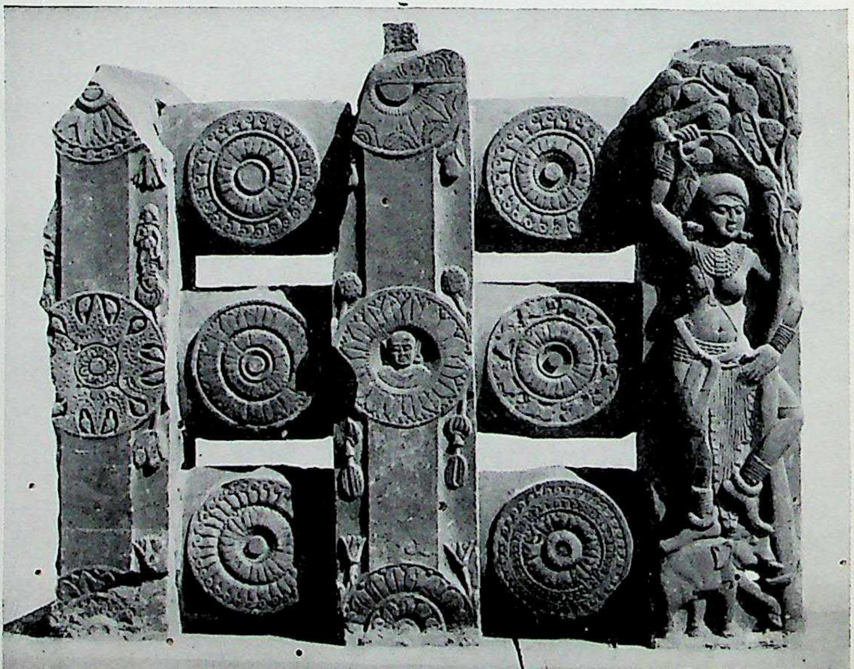
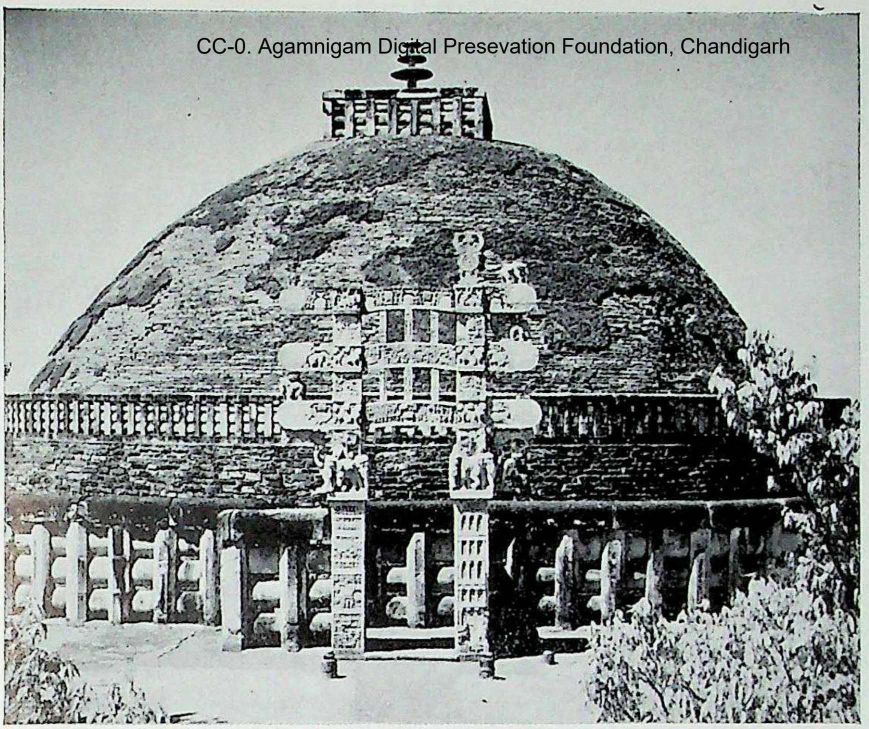


8
Front view of the Chaitya Hall at Karle



9
Bharhut Pillar



10
The Great Stupa, Sanchi

The Sanchi stupas are different in date. The core of the stupa No. 1 was probably built in the Mauryan age. The stupas Nos. 2 and 3 are of Sungan origin and the gateways of Nos. 1 and 3 belong to the Satavahana period (72-25 B.C.). The reliefs on No. 2 are related to Bharhut style, but there are some reliefs which exhibit greater knowledge of spatial relation which is attributed to the hypothetical influence of Bactrian Hellenistic art, but its more natural explanation would be the stylistic advance of Indian art.

The reliefs of the Great Gateway (Figs. 10 & 11) are marvels of decorative story-telling. The principal themes are drawn from the life of the Buddha and from the Jatakas. The bigger compositions were attempted on torana architraves.

The excavations at Taxila and elsewhere have provided us with the architectural movement between 78 A.D. and 302 A.D. The architectural style in the monasteries is fundamentally Indian, but numerous motifs, for instance, the Corinthian capital, pediments, entablatures, mouldings, etc., are of debased classical order. A typical Gandharan monastery consists mainly of two structures, stupa and the monastery with the aggregate of other buildings.

Among the great monuments of the Deccan during this period may be mentioned the Great Stupa at Amaravati, which though originally built in the 2nd century B.C. was provided with

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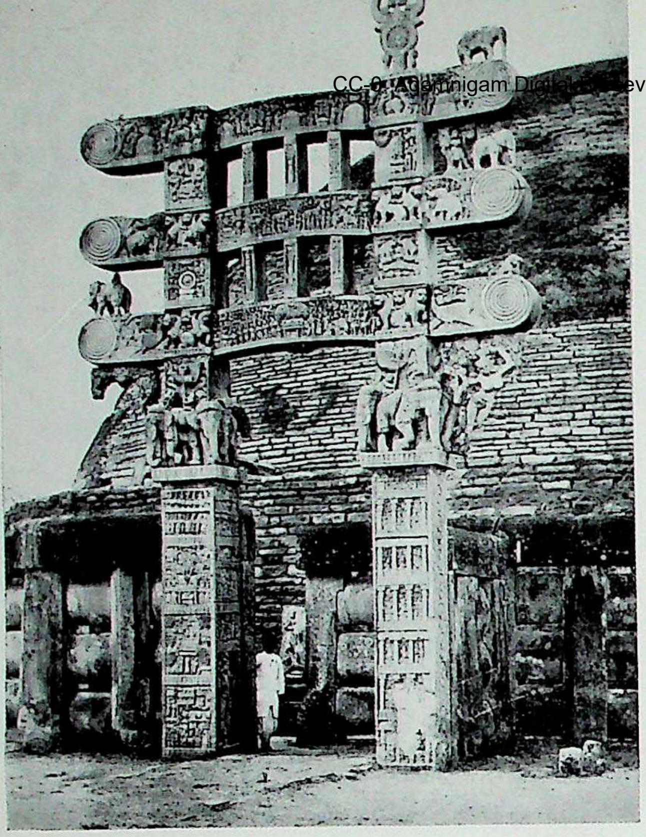
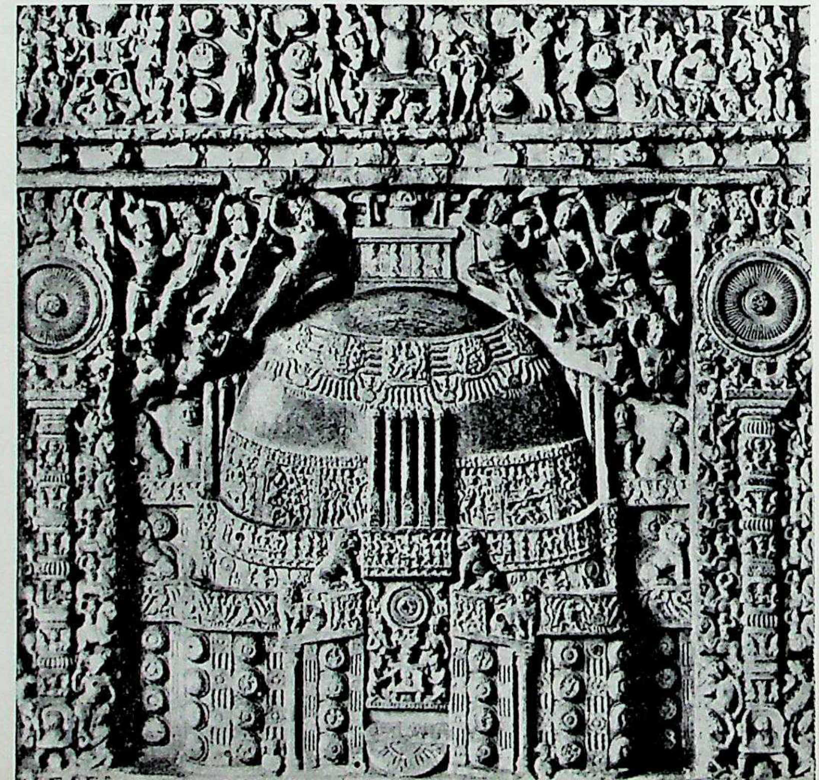


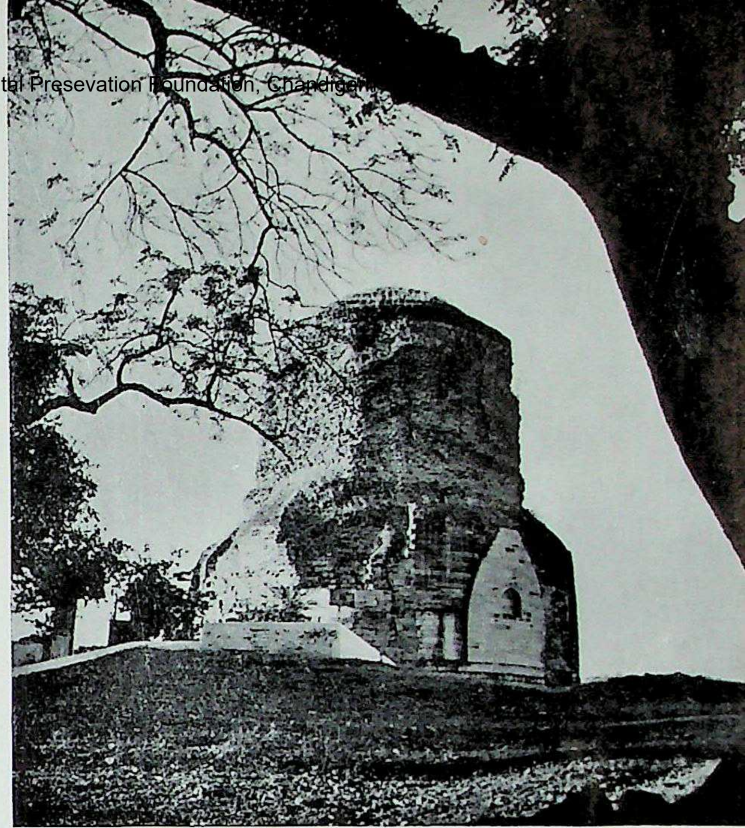
11
Sanchi Gate

12
The Great Amaravati Stupa



sculptured casing slabs and railings in the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. Around the Stupa was an upper processional path with projecting offsets facing each of the entrances and each displaying five ayaka pillars. In addition there was a balustrade provided to this terrace (Fig. 12.) The subject matter of decoration are rosettes, garland carrying erotes, Jataka stories, walled and moated cities, palace buildings, torans, stupas, etc. The technical proficiency of the Amaravati relief makes them the most voluptuous and expressive of Indian sculpture.

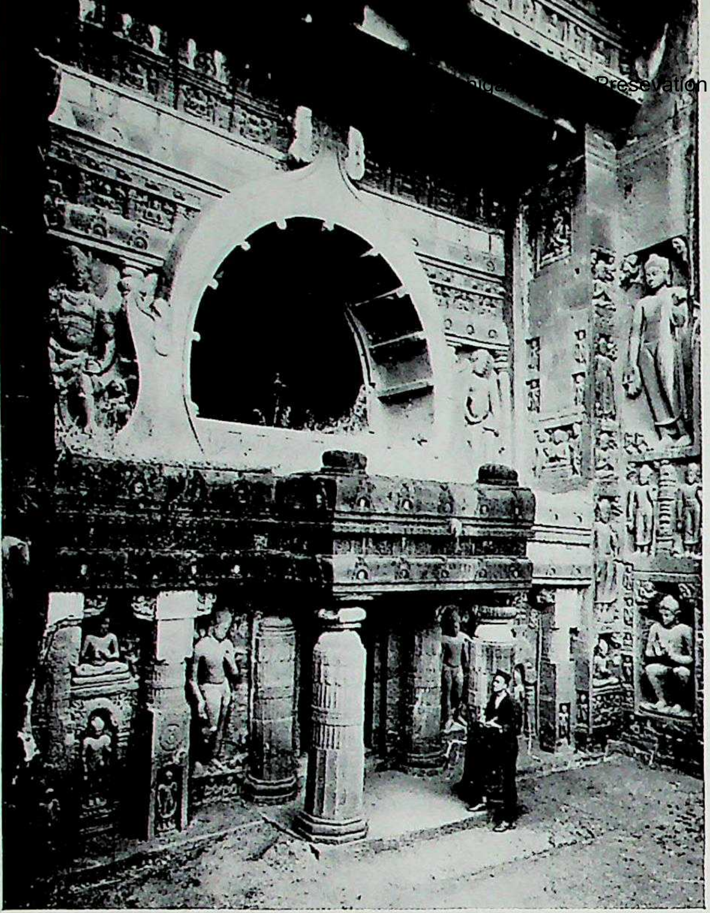
There is little doubt that Indian architecture and sculpture attained their zenith in the Gupta period (320-650 A.D.). Henceforward the sculptural art becomes part and parcel of temple architecture which assumes its national aspect. It is impossible to give any detailed description of the hundreds of Gupta temples scattered all over the country and, therefore, only the best examples are referred to.



13
Dhamek Stupa, Sarnath

Attention may be drawn to the famous Dhamek stupa at Sarnath near Banaras datable to the 6th century which is characterised by exquisitely carved ornaments, geometrical and floral (Fig. 13). The Ajanta Caves Nos. XVI, XVII and XIX are distinguished for the beauty of their pillars. The Chaitya windows with their double row of cornice in Cave No. XIX at once attracts our attention (Fig. 14). There are several aspidal temples of the Gupta period at Ter and elsewhere. Among flat-roofed shrines a prominent place must be given to the flat-roofed temples at Sanchi (Fig. 15), and Bhumara. The Saiva temple at Bhumara consists of a flat roof and decorated windows. It was provided with a variety of richly carved sculptures. The famous Mahabodhi temple at Bodh Gaya, in spite of its restoration, probably maintains its form of the early Gupta period. It consists of a high straight-edged pyramidal tower of nine storeys (Fig. 16).

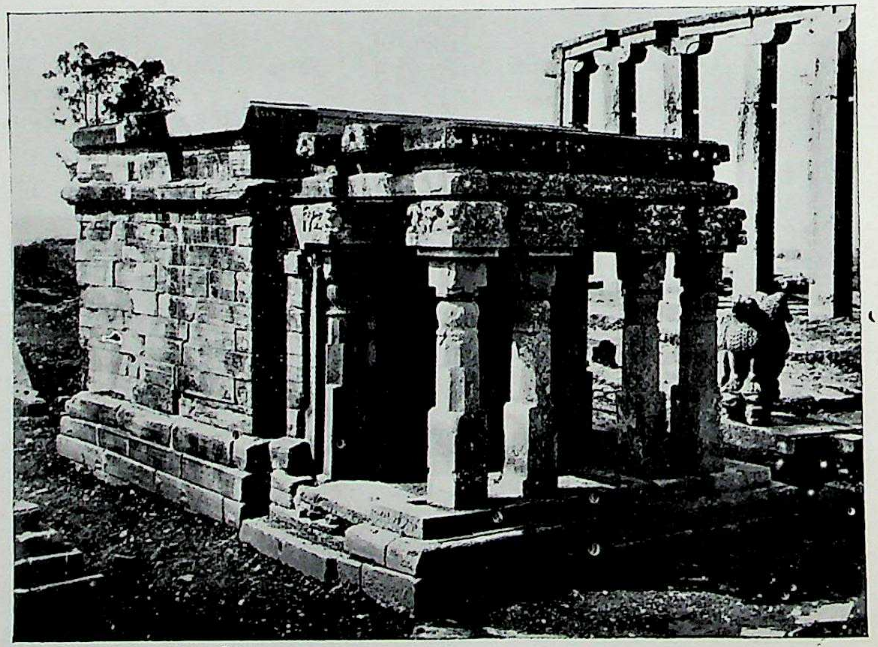
Examples of Indian palace architecture in the Gupta period being entirely of wood have not survived. On the



strength of contemporary paintings, however, it could be said that the Gupta palace consisted of one or two storeys, and was provided with pillared halls with flat or pointed roof decorated with paintings and reliefs. It was also provided with a concert hall and a picture gallery.

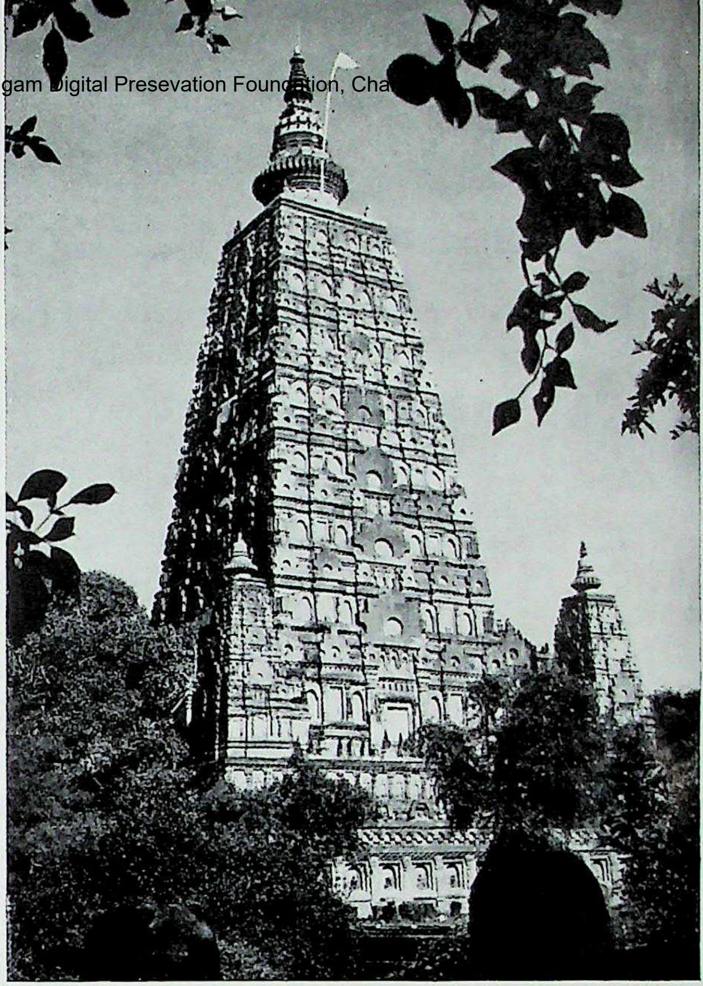
After the Guptas, in the early mediaeval times (650-900 A.D.) substantial contribution was made to Indian architecture by the Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and Pallavas in the Deccan and the Palas in Northern India. The famous Buddhist University of Nalanda was at its zenith in the 7th century. This University was surrounded by brick walls and a gate opened into the great hall of the college from which the other halls stood apart. There was an observatory used for planetary observations. The outer courts contained priests' chambers in four stages, each stage separated by carved and ornamented pillars (Fig. 17).

14
Facade of Cave XIX, Ajanta

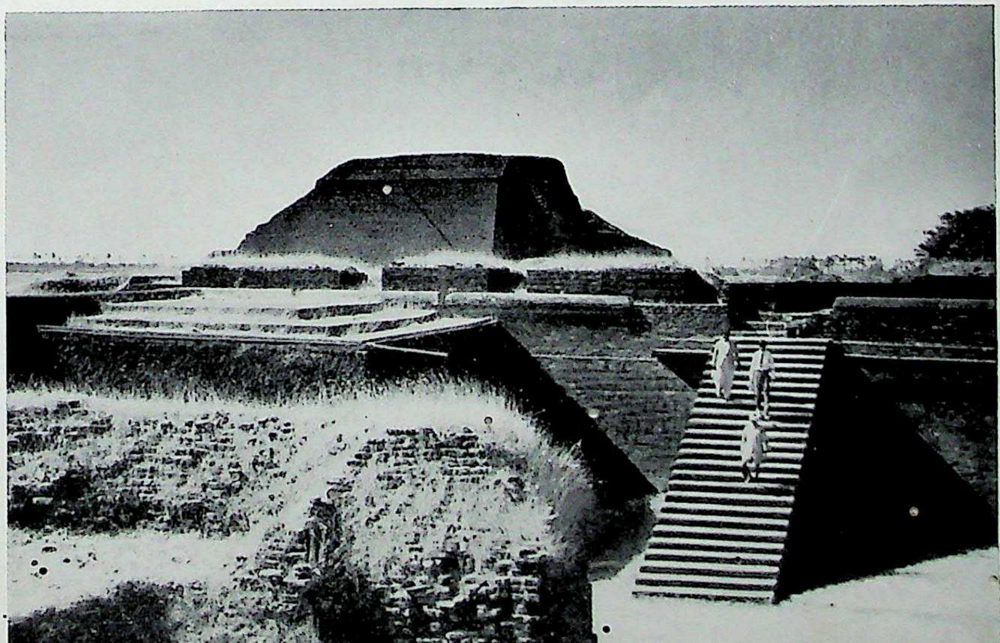


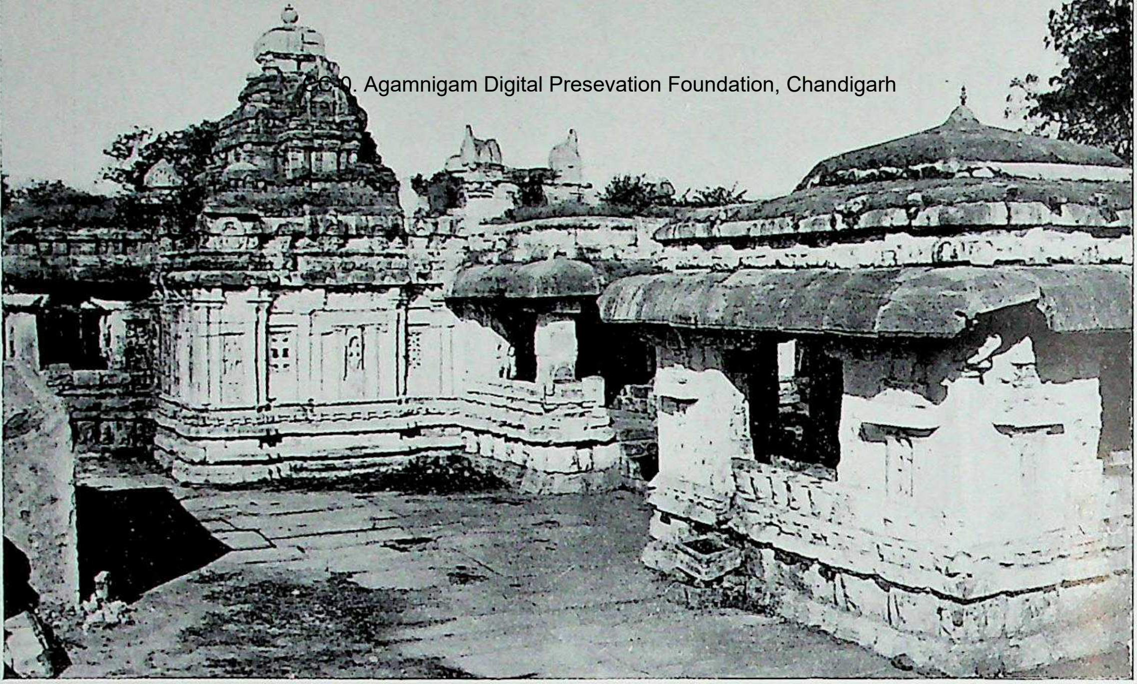
15
Flat-roofed Gupta temple at Sanchi

16
The temple at Bodh Gaya

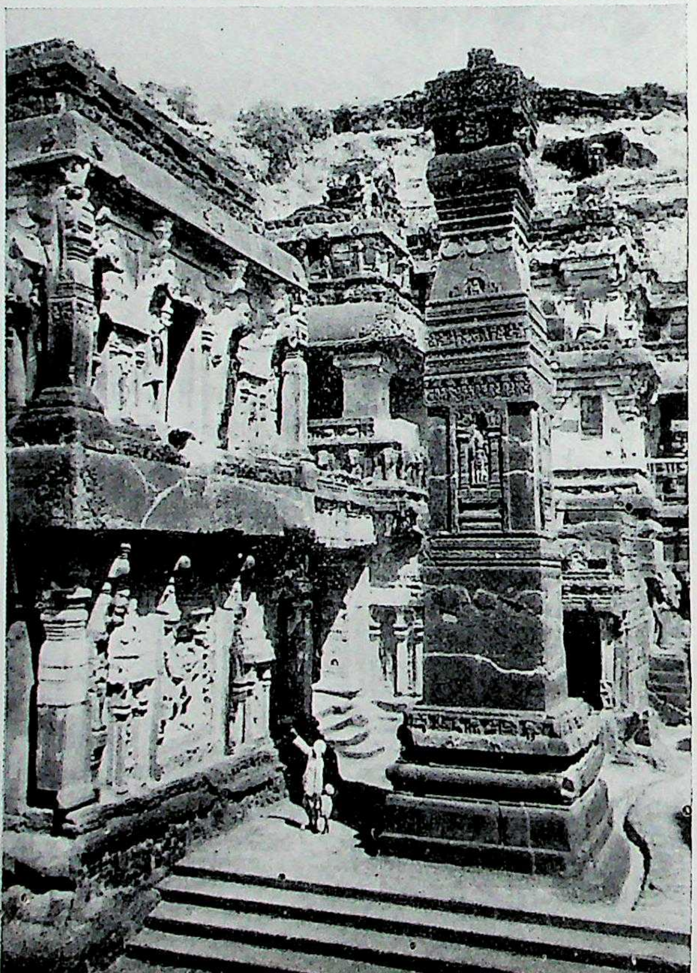


17
The University of Nalanda





18
The great Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal



19
A view of the southern side of Kailasa Temple

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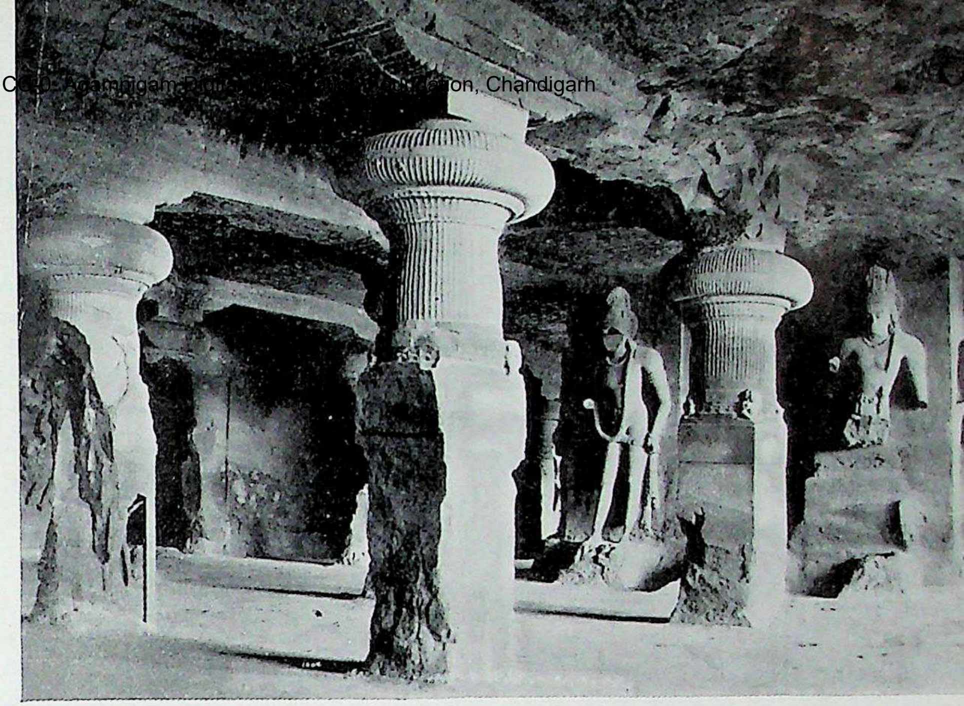
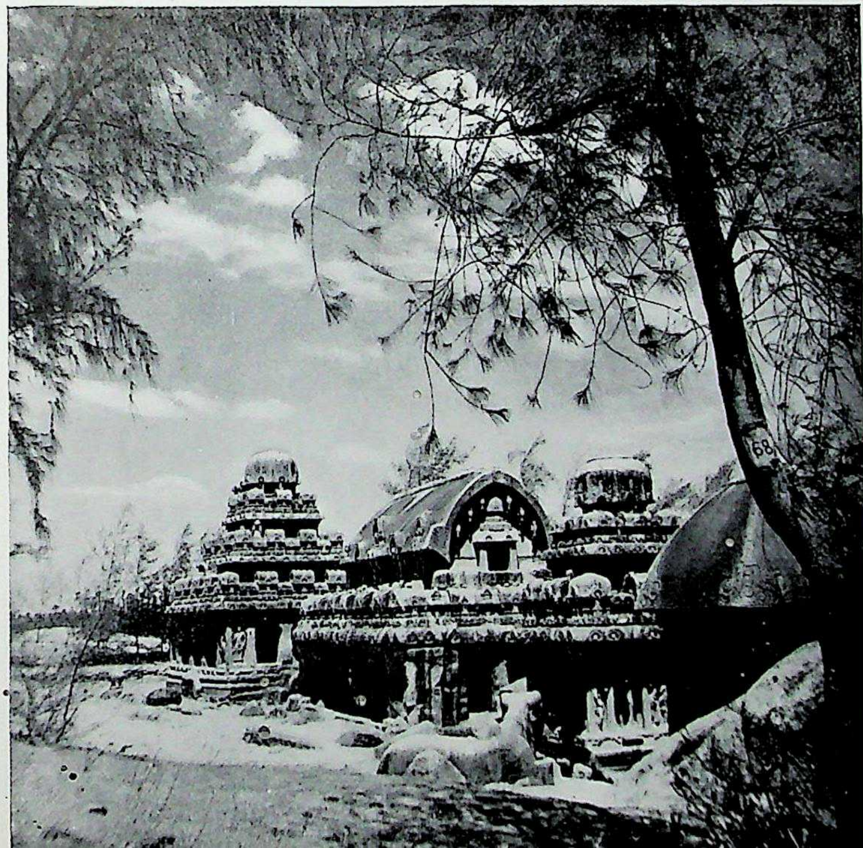


20
The Elephanta Cave

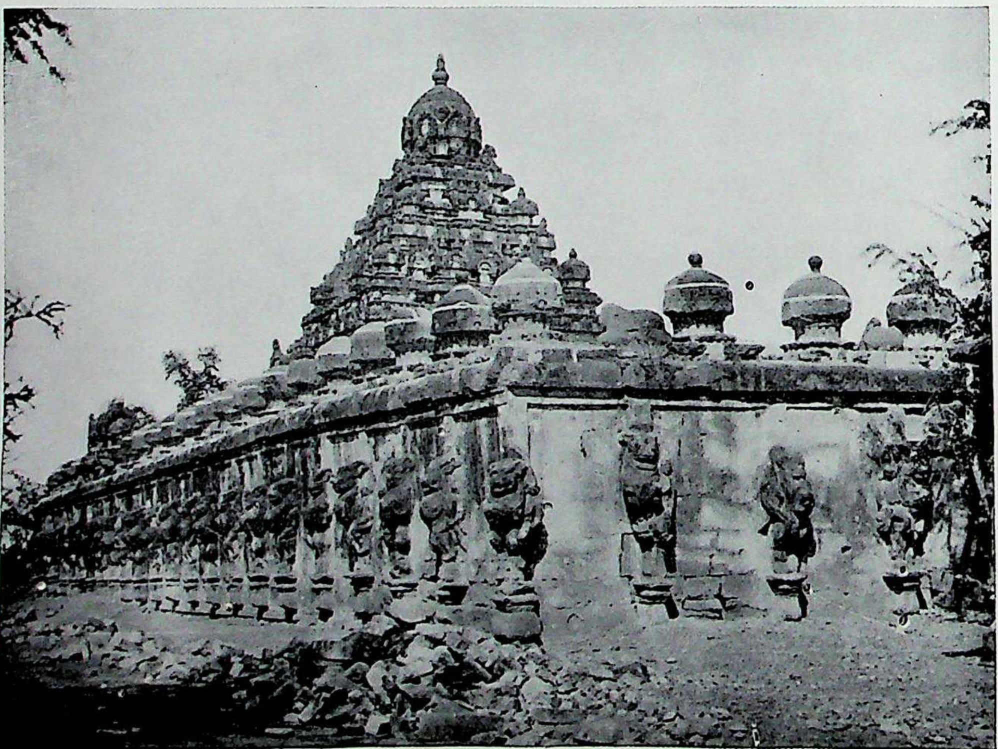


21
A general view of the rathas, Mahabalipuram

Examples of the early Chalukyan architecture datable between 550 and 746 may be studied from the famous temples at Aihole, Pattadakal and Badami. The great Virupaksha temple of Siva (*c.* 740 A.D.) at Pattadakal (Fig. 18) was built by one Gunda who received the title of the 'Master Architect in the Three Worlds'. The Vaishnava cave temple at Badami is distinguished for its admirable reliefs and the pillars of the verandah are decorated with magnificent human figures.

Among the famous monuments or temples raised by the Rashtrakutas may be mentioned the great Kailasa temple built at Ellura (Fig. 19) by Krishna II (757-783). It is decorated with the finest sculptural composition known in India. To the same period may be dated the Saiva shrines of Elephanta (Fig. 20) in the neighbourhood of Bombay which is not so much distinguished for its architecture as for its beautiful sculptures which include the famous Trimurti Siva.

The Pallavas were also a great power in the south and on the east coast between 400 and 750 A.D. A passing reference may be made here to the five rathas at Mahabalipuram, all monoliths datable to the first half of the 7th century (Fig. 21). The characteristic details of this architecture include a capital without flat abacus, plain or horizontally fluted brackets, roll cornice with Chaitya window niches and makara torana lintels. The divine and human figures have been most beautifully represented. Another Pallava temple known as the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi, datable to the 8th century, has a pyramidal tower

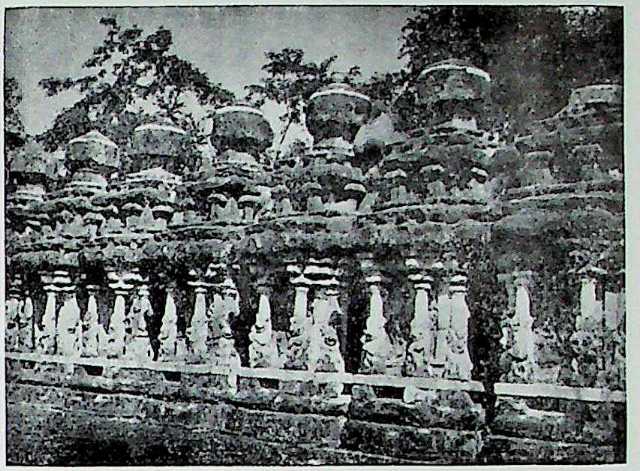


22
Kailasanatha Temple at Kanchi

consisting of a tower and a flat-pillared mandapa surrounded by continuous series of cells (Figs. 22 & 23).

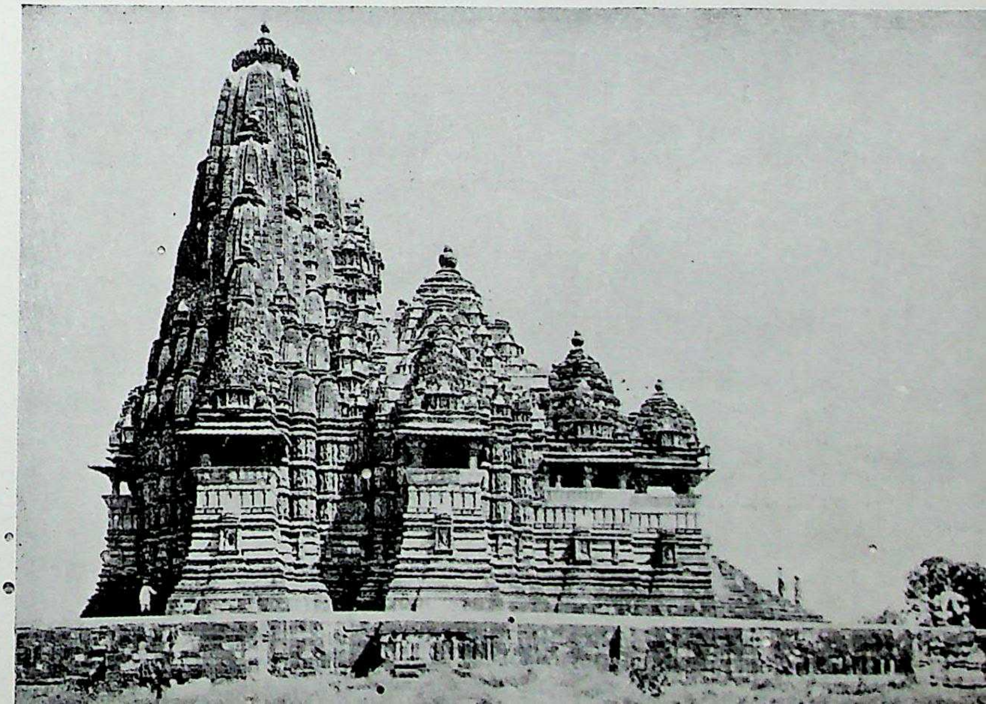
The temples and monuments of the late mediaeval period (900-1300 A.D.) of Indian architecture are too numerous to be recounted here. Besides the old centres, new art centres were being patronised by the Palas, Chalukyas and Cholas, the Gangas and Rajputs. Each centre developed its own style. The most clearly differentiated types, however, are the Northern, marked by curvilinear sikhara, the Southern with a terraced pyramidal tower and the Central combining the peculiarities of both.

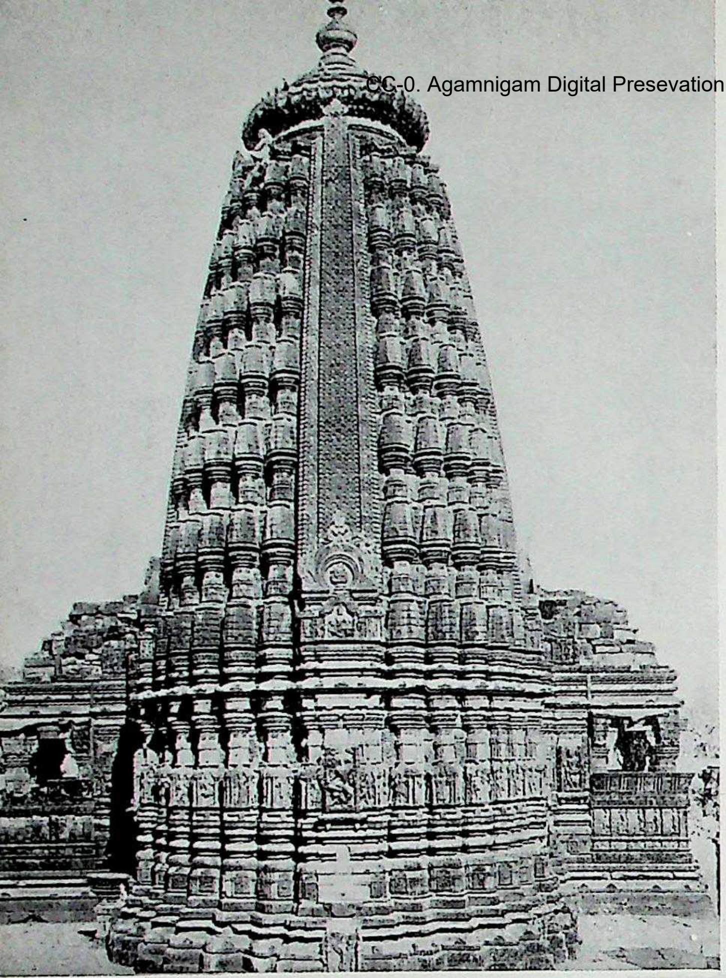
The beautiful temples at Khajuraho were erected between 950 and 1050 A.D. The effect of the height of the Kandarya Mahadeva Temple is enhanced by a deep basement and the reduplication of the tower. Floral and human sculptures add to its beauty considerably (Fig. 24).



23
Wall of the courtyard, Kailasanatha Temple, Kanchi

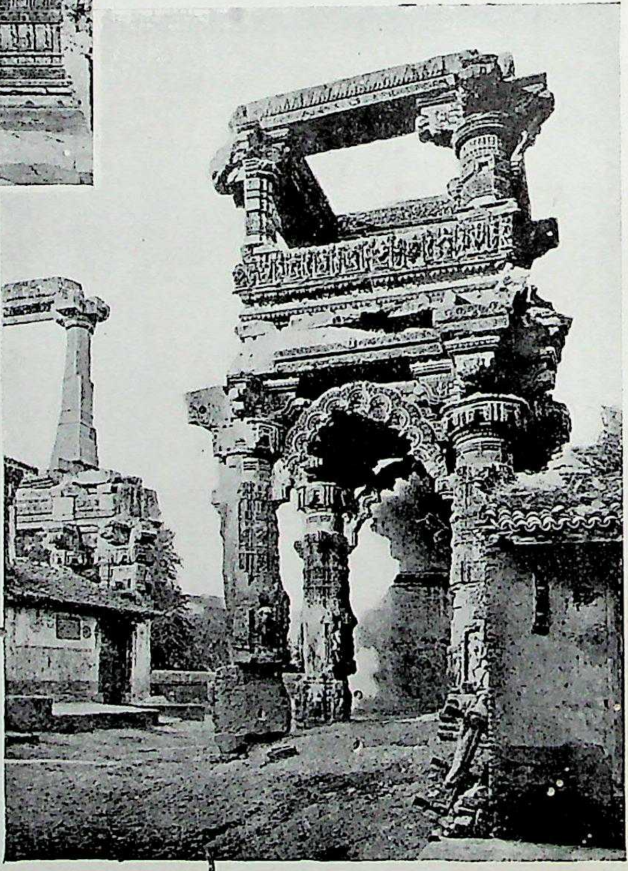
24
Mahadeva Temple at Khajuraho





25
The temple of Udayeshvar, Udaipur, Madhya Bharat

26
Rudramal Temple at Siddhpur, Patan



In Madhya Bharat the finest and the best preserved temple is that of Udayeshvar at Udaipur built between 1059 and 1080. The sikhara is ornamented with four narrow bands running from the base to the summit (Fig. 25).

Gujarat in this period also became very famous for its beautiful and richly ornamented temples. The famous Rudramal temple at Siddhpur was built by Siddharaja (1093-1143 A.D.) (Fig. 26). At Mt. Abu may be seen famous Jain temples, one built by

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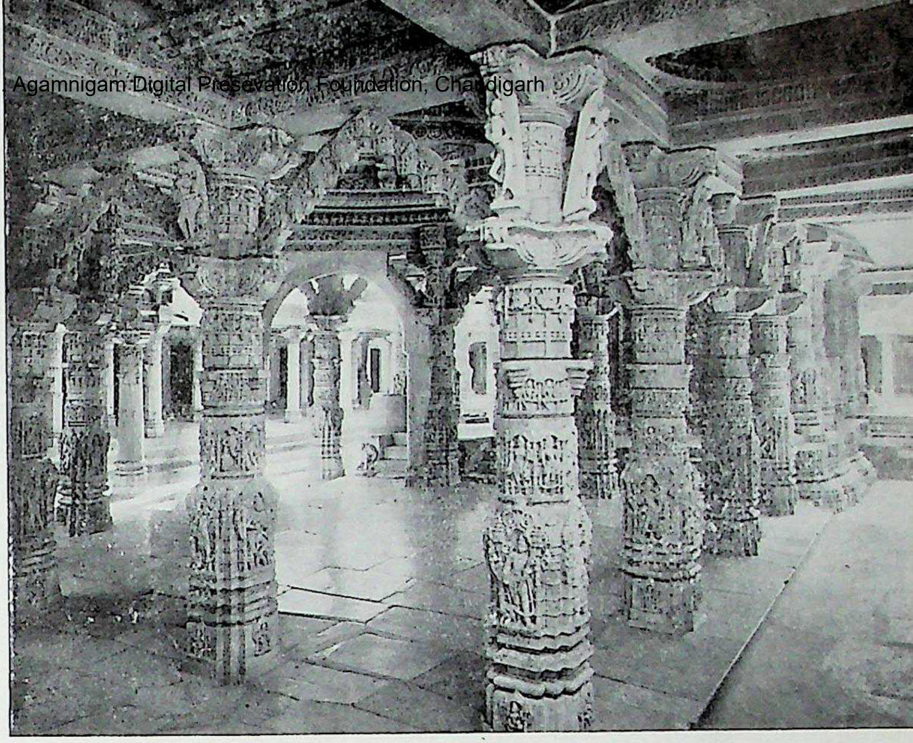
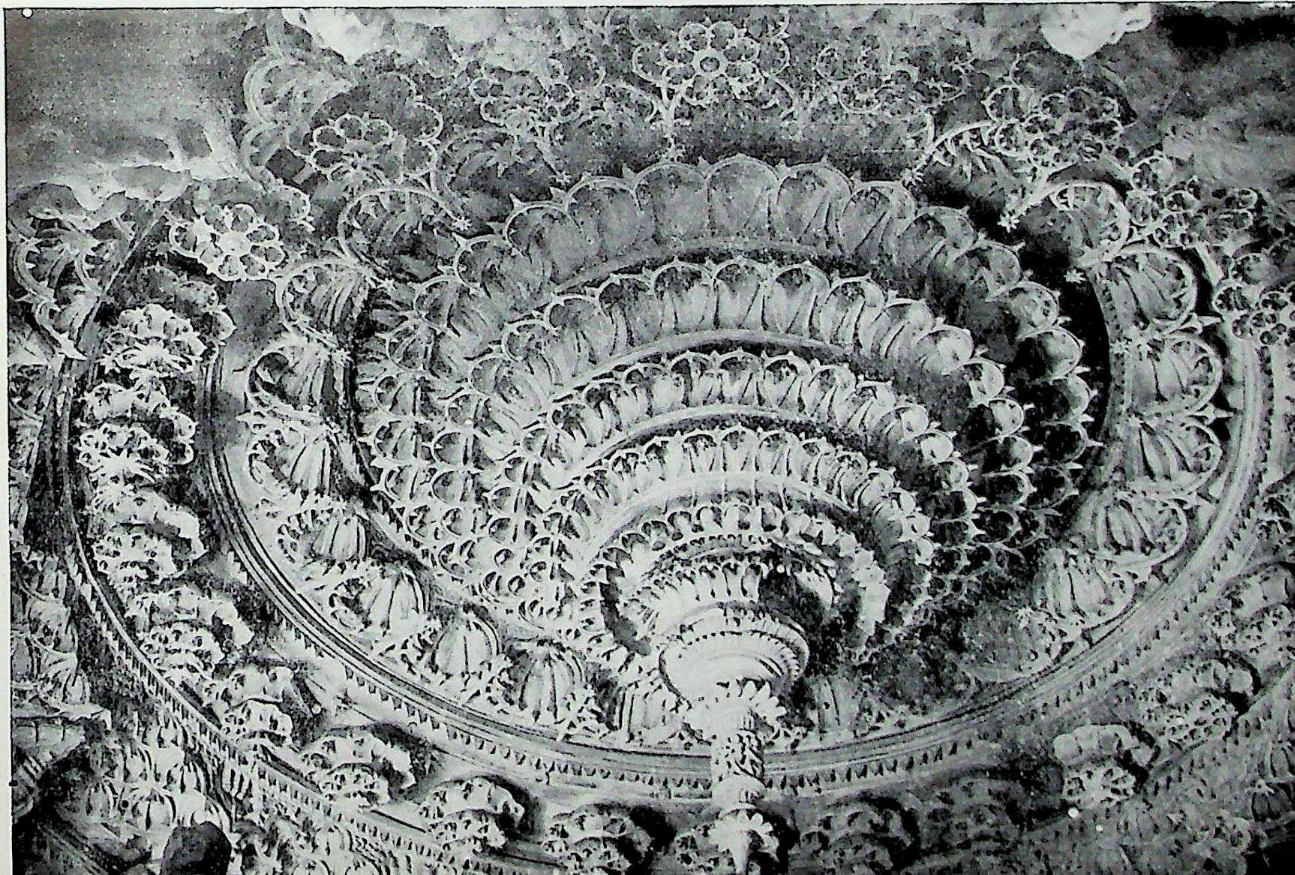
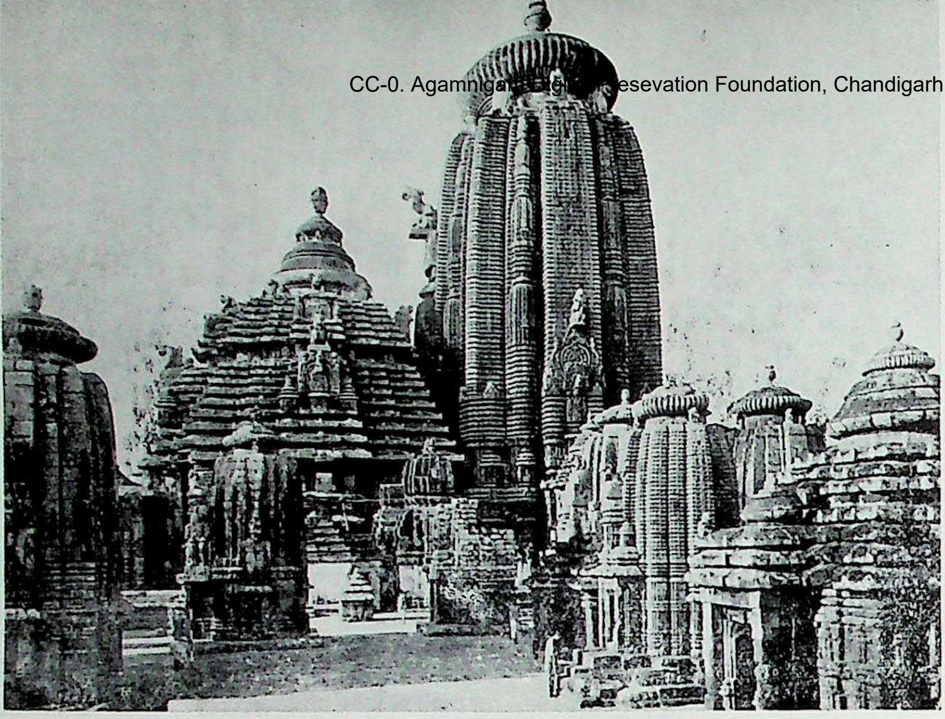
27
Vimal Shah's Temple, Mount Abu



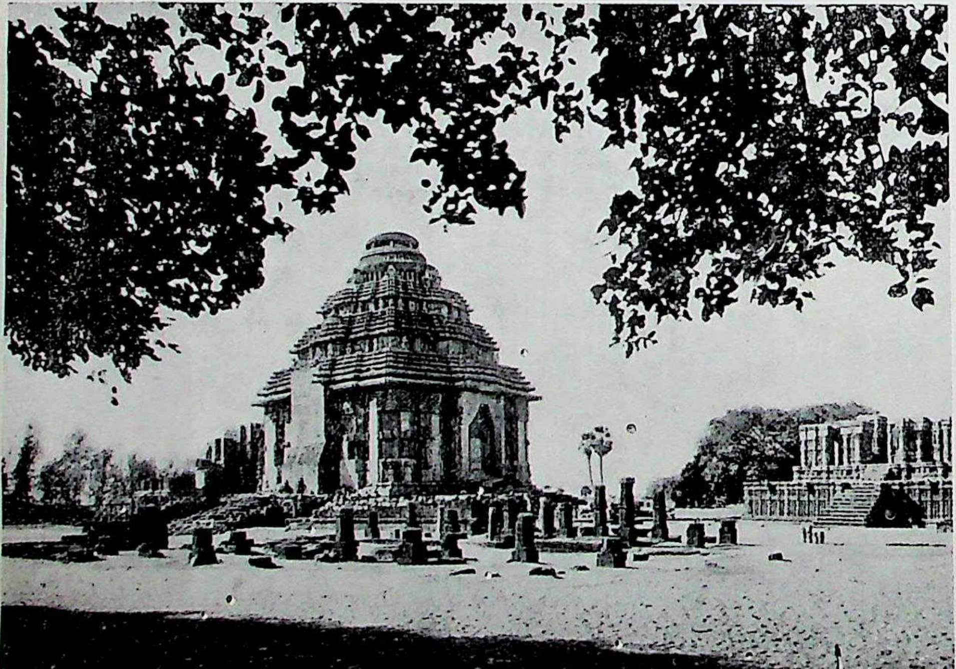
28
Ceiling of the famous Tejpal Temple at Mount Abu





29
Lingaraja Temple at Bhuvaneshvar

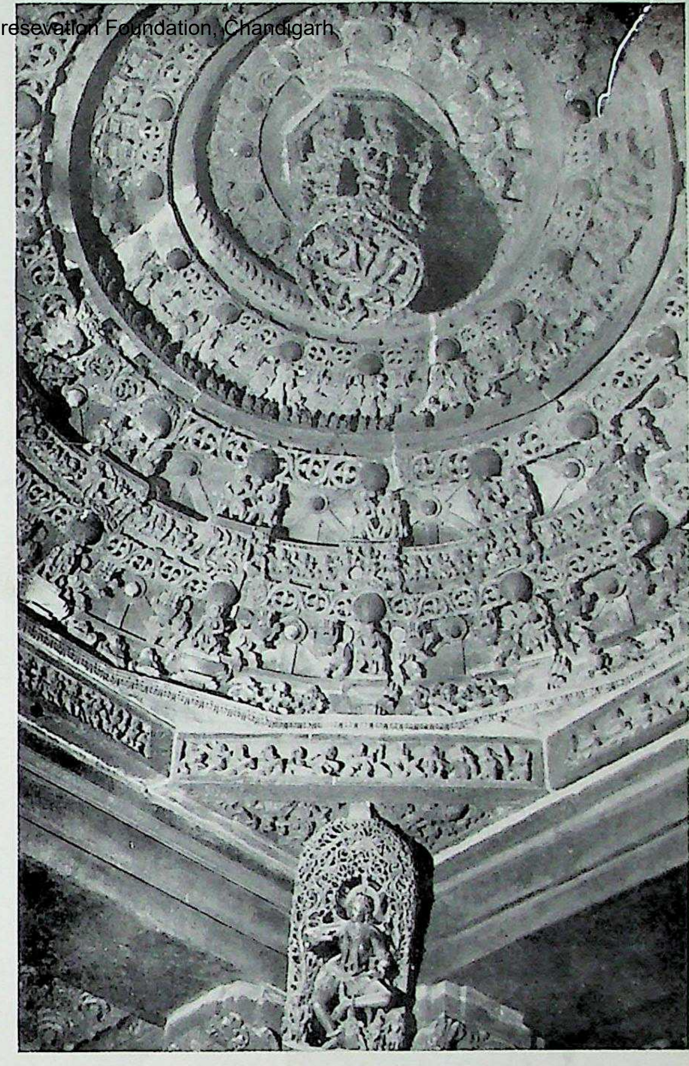
Vimal Shah in 1032 (Fig. 27) and another by Tejpal in 1232 (Fig. 28). The entire [illegible] is of marble. As observed by Cousins, "the amount of beautiful ornamental detail spread over these temples in the minutely carved decoration of ceilings, pillars, doorways, panels and niches is simply marvellous; the crisp, thin, translucent, shell-like treatment of the marble surpasses anything seen elsewhere and some of the designs are veritable dreams of beauty."



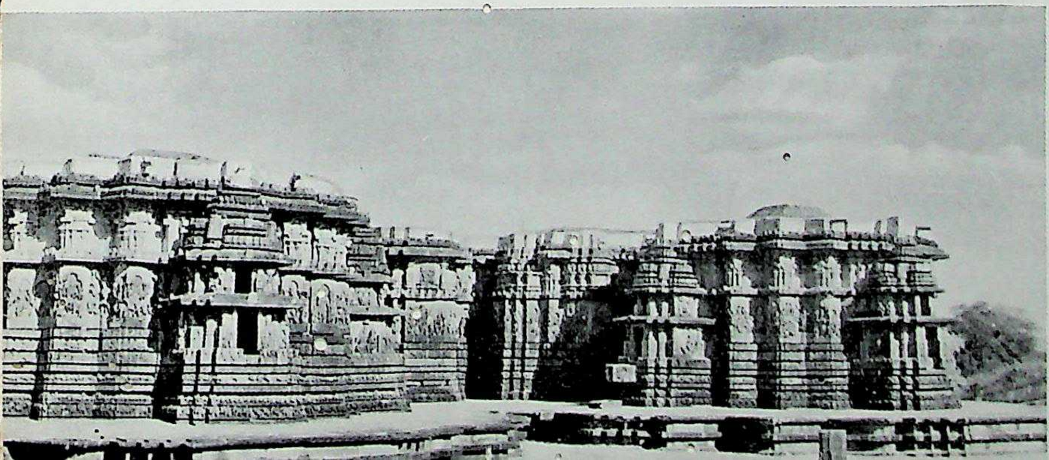
30
The Temple of Sun, Konarak, Orissa

The Orissan temples dated from the 8th to 13th century amply illustrate the growth of the Nagara style. The Siva shrine of Parasuramesvara has a low double-roofed mandapa with solid walls lighted by openings between the roofs. The great temple of Lingaraja (Fig. 29) looks imposing with the effect of the height of the sikhara enhanced by the vertical lines of the strongly emphasised ribs. The beautiful Sun temple at Konarak, built between 1238 and 1264, does not differ essentially from other Orissan temples. Its most remarkable feature survives in the roof of the mandapa or jagmohana which is divided into three stages (Fig. 30). All Orissan temples are filled with beautiful sculptures of erotic nature and other decorative details which win our admiration.

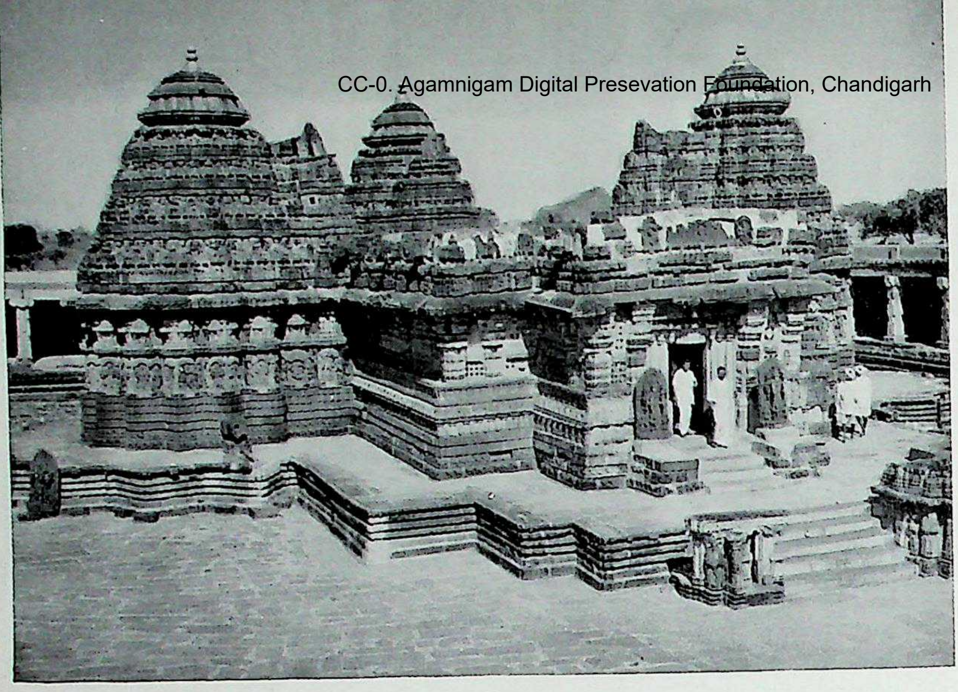
The temples of the later Chalukyan style are widely distributed in Dharwar, Mysore (Figs. 31, 32 & 33) and the Deccan. The fully developed type is a star-shaped plan with a relatively low elevation and wide extension, characterised by the grouping of three shrines round a central hall, pyramidal towers carrying the plan of the shrine below,



31
Carved ceiling from Chenna-Kesava Temple, Belur



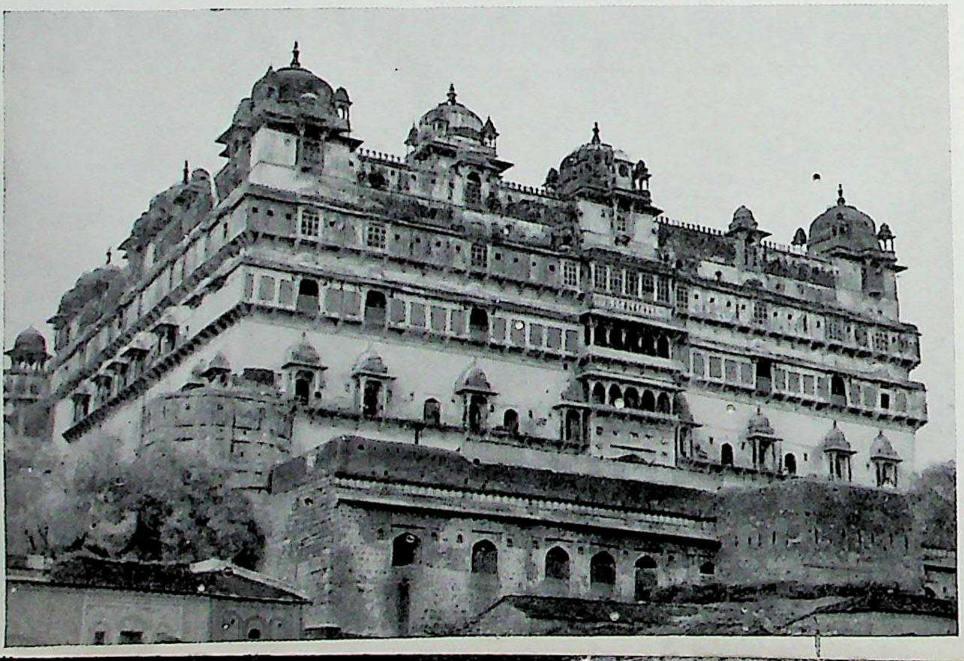
32
The Hoysalesvara Temple, Halebid



33
The Kesava Temple, Somnathpur, Mysore

elaborately pierced windows and cylindrical polished pillars.

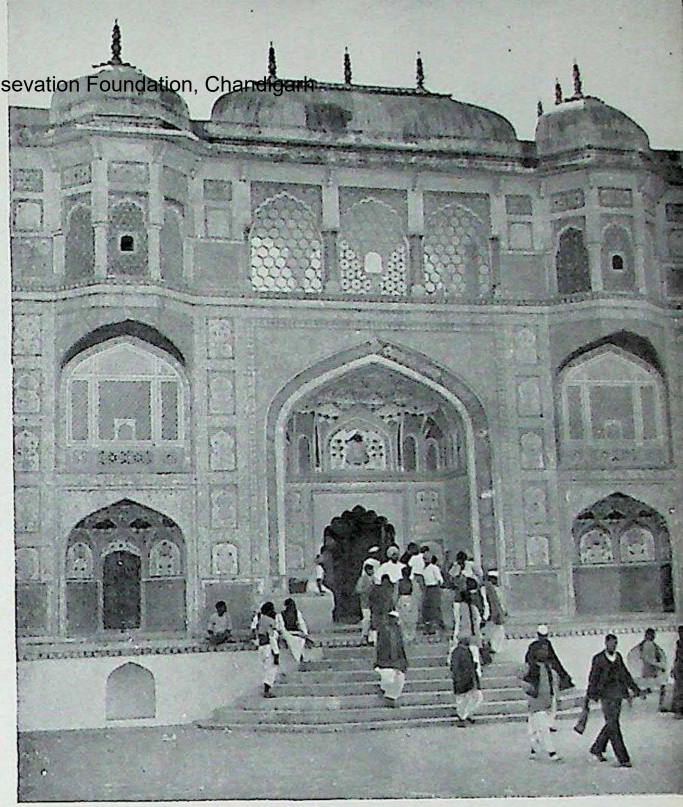
In the later mediaeval period, from the 15th century onwards, the Hindu princes built large palaces in Rajaputana and Bundelkhand. The immense palace at Gwalior, partly built by Man Singh (1486-1518) is famous for its wall towers and imposing gates. The magnificent palace at Datia, built by Bir Singh in the 17th century, is the best example of Hindu architecture (Fig. 34).



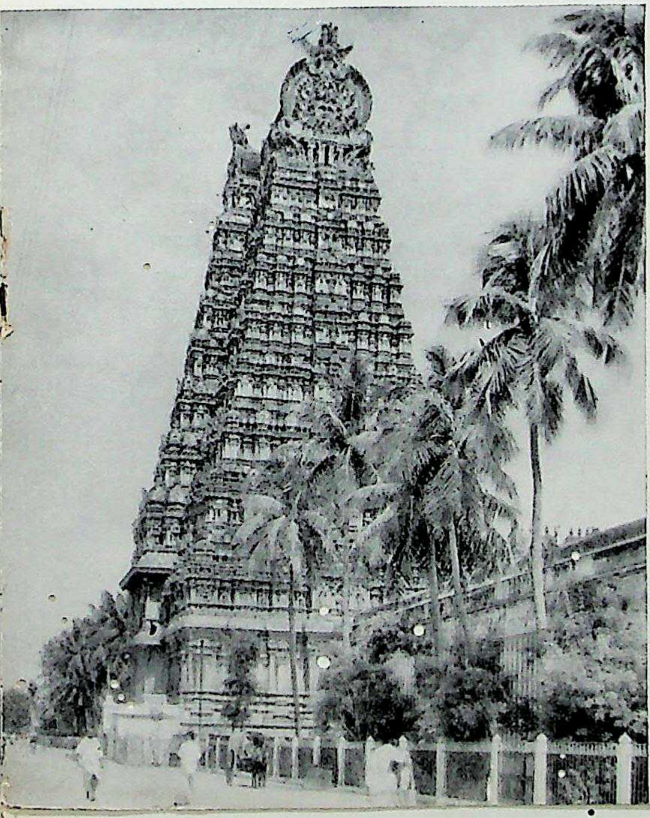
34
Bir Singh's palace at Datia

The palace at Amber was also built in the 17th century (Fig. 35). The Jodhpur Fort, with its tremendous bastion, and the old palace are among the best examples of the Rajput architecture in existence.

Reverting to the south, between 850 and 1600 A.D. the temple architecture found patronage with the Cholas, Pandyas, Vijayanagara kings and the Nayakas of Madura. The great gopuras of the Pandya period are found at Srirangam, Chidambaram, Kumbakonam, etc. These great towers attain such ample proportions that they dwarf the central shrine (Fig. 36). The examples of the great pillared mandapa of the Vijayanagara period are found at Kanchi, Vijayanagara and Vellur, etc. The finest of all Vijayanagara temples is the Vithoba temple finished in 1565. Its distinguished features are the pillars and mandapas and the stone car carved out of stone blocks. The Nayakas of Madura in the 17th century were also great builders. Tirumala Nayaka (1623-1659) built the Vasant Mandapa in front of the great Meenakshi temple (Fig. 37). It has a flat-roofed corridor with three aisles.



35
The Palace at Amber



36
The Meenakshi Temple, Madura

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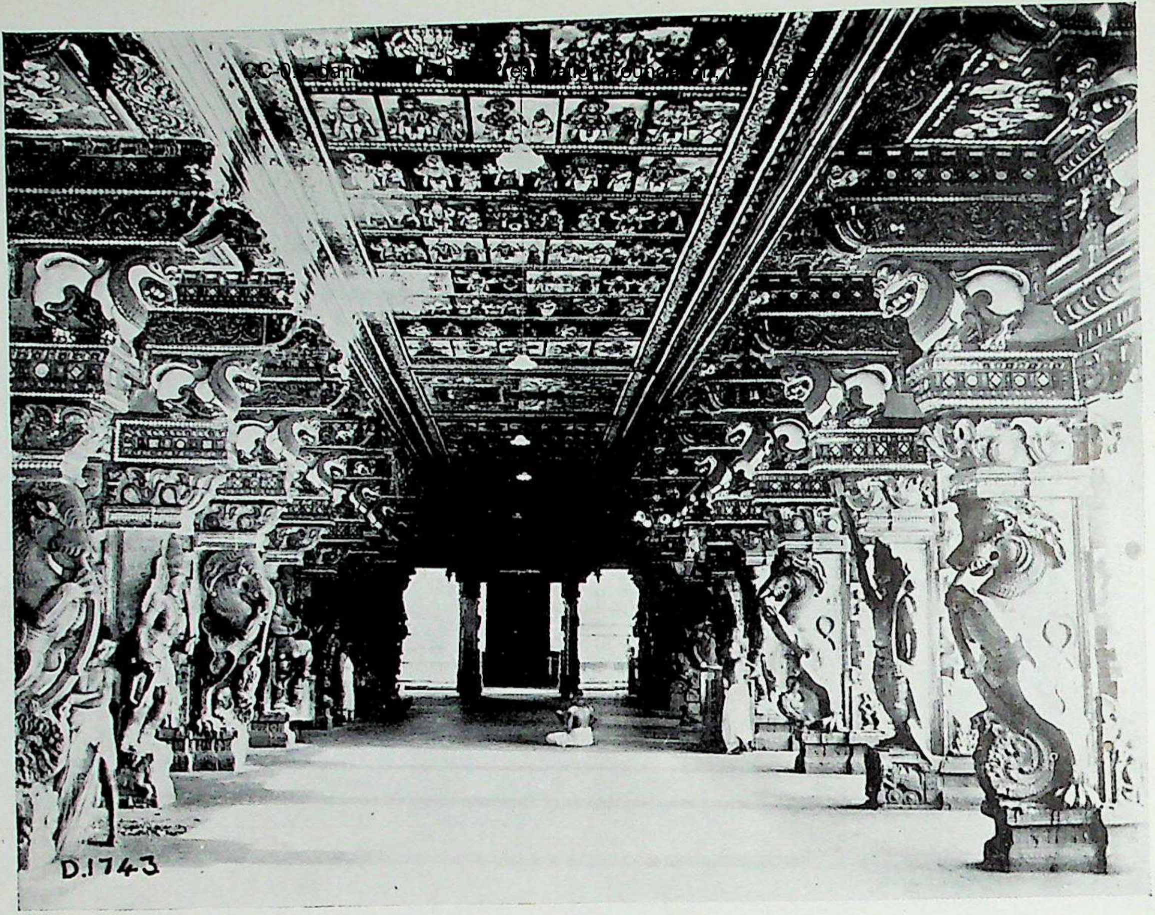


37
Sculptured south corridor, Meenakshi Temple, Madura

II

The establishment of Islamic power by the end of the 12th century in Northern India brought face to face two contrasting cultures whose united genius brought into being what we call Islamic art of India. It drew its inspiration from Syria and Egypt, Northern Africa and Sassanian Persia, and its architecture acquired a fundamental character of its own distinguished by standardised forms and concepts. It is equally true of Islamic architecture that it always developed local Muslim styles based primarily on indigenous ideals and stamped with a strong national individuality.

In the development of Islamic architecture in the Turkish and Afghan period (*c.* 1200-1550 A.D.) Delhi occupied a prominent place as it was here that the Muhammadans first erected their splendid mosques. Kutb-ud-din Aibak erected his famous Jama mosque in 1191 A.D. It has certain Hindu characteristics. In 1230 Iltutmish doubled this mosque and Ala-ud-din added the third court, reduplicating the prayer chamber on the north. The most significant building within the mosque is the Kutb Minar (Fig. 38) intended first as the tower from which the Muezzin could summon the Faithful to prayer, but later regarded as a Tower of Victory.

From 1236 to the accession of Ala-ud-din in 1296 A.D., the history of the Sultanate architecture is blank save the tomb of Balban (1266-86 A.D.). The famous monument of the Ala-ud-din period is Alai Darwaza built in 1311 which served as a gateway leading to the Kuwaat-ul-Islam mosque.

In the Tughluk period (1320-1413) the architecture of Delhi entered a new phase in which lavish display of ornament gave place to sobriety. The city of Tughlukabad built by Ghiyas-ud-din (1321-25) is noted for its cyclopean walls, colossal bastions and lofty, narrow portals. The tomb of Ghiyas-ud-din is in the shape of an island castle with battering walls and sturdy proportion. Firuz Shah was the greatest builder in the line of the Tughluks who built cities, forts, palaces, tombs and other buildings of public utility. Besides Jaunpur, he built at Delhi the palace fort of Firuzabad which was provided with 120 rest houses. The chief defect of the architecture of this period, however, is its monotonous repetition.

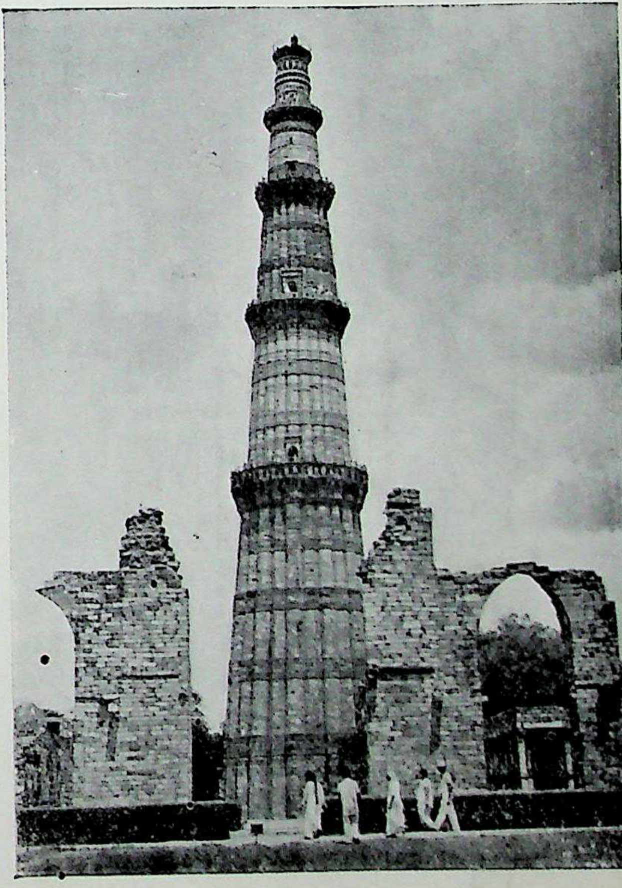
From the numerous monuments of Firuz Shah at Delhi, the most considerable is the Kotla Firuz Shah, the palace-citadel which the Emperor built within his new city of Firuzabad. Among the monuments within this citadel may be mentioned the Jama Masjid, an imposing building of two storeys. The pillar of Asoka (Fig. 39) which stood in front of the mosque came from Tora in Ambala District; the pillar from Meerut District was set in Kushk-i-Shikar palace. Attention may also be drawn to the mausoleum of Kha-i-Jahan Tilangani (died 1368-69), the Prime Minister of Firuz Shah, situated a little south to the Dargah of Nizamuddin Aulia.

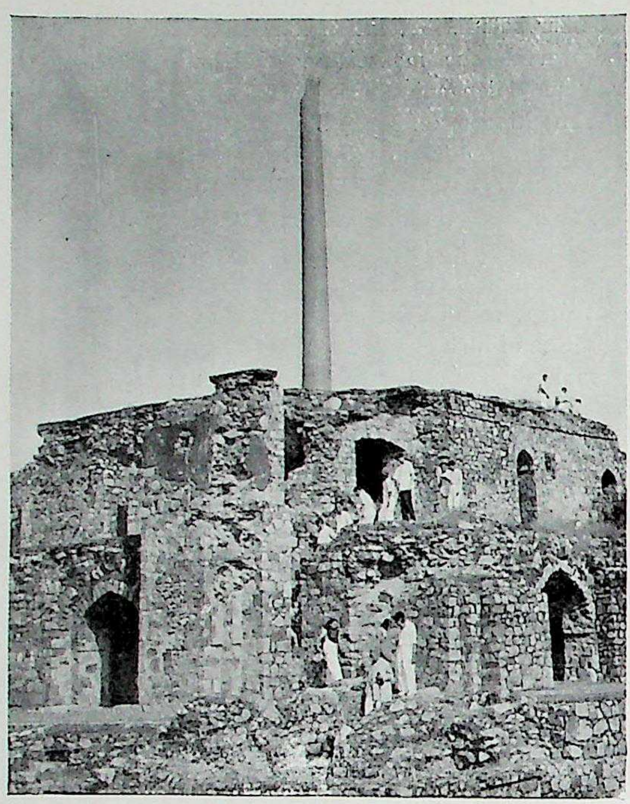
There is nothing much to say about the building activity of the Sayyid and Lodi kings. The distinctive features of their architecture were the use of blue enamelled tiling to give emphasis to decorative features, the elaborate treatment of surface and the use of lotus finial on the domes.

While Muslim architecture was developing at Delhi on the lines described above the provincial capitals had

38

The Kutb Minar



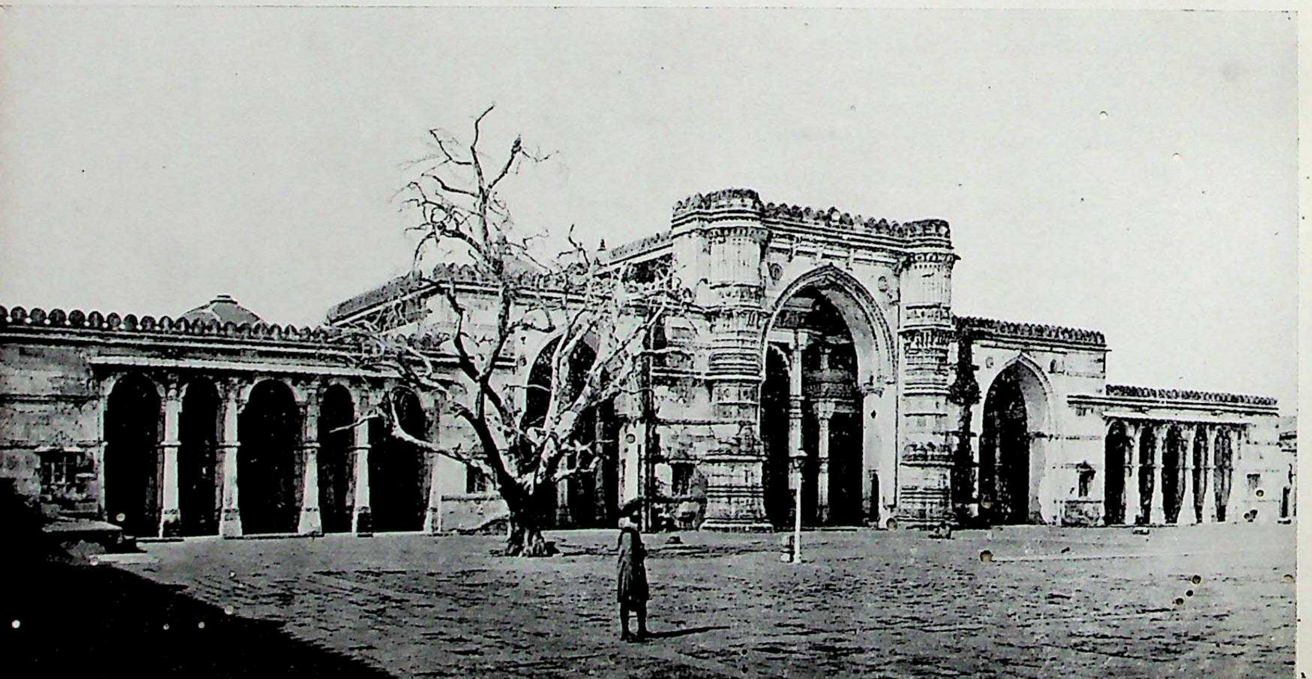


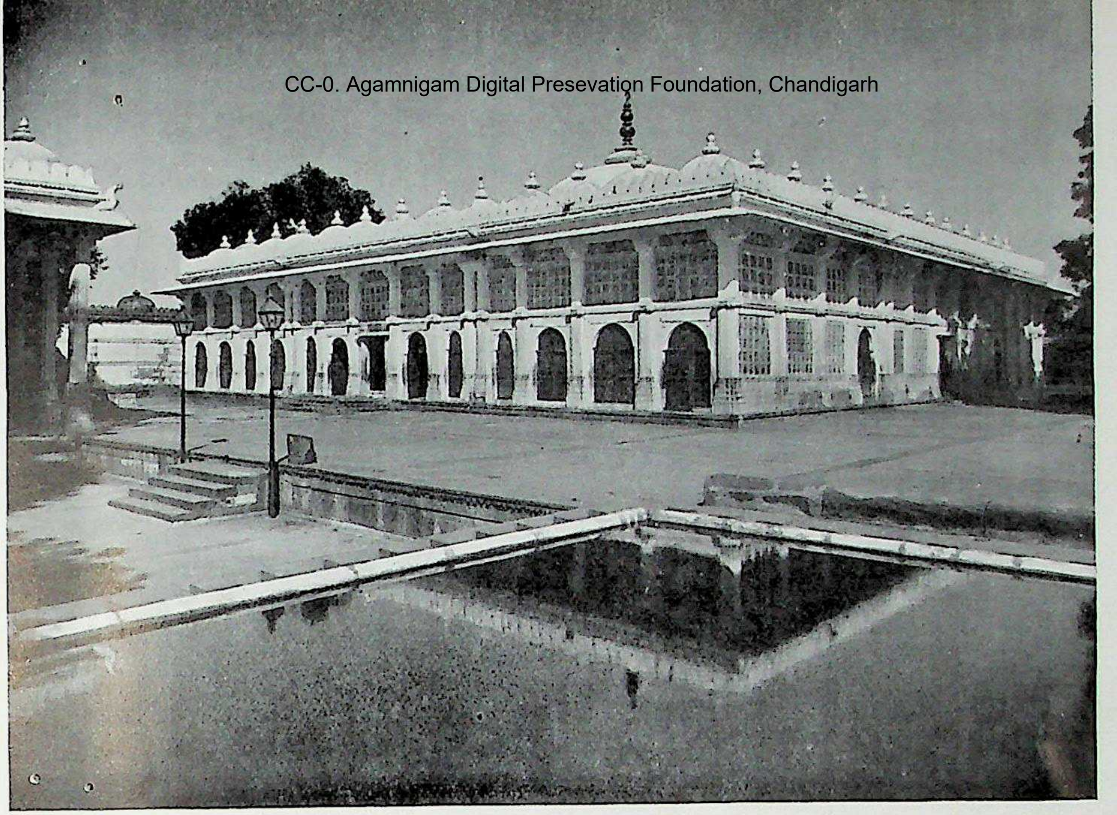
their individual architectural styles between the 13th and 15th centuries. Bengal was annexed as early as 1198-99 by Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khan. In that part of the country brick, timber and bamboo were the principal building materials in use. The Muhammadans found certain characteristic features of the architecture of Bengal, such as the use of square brick pillars of stunted proportions, peculiar form of curvilinear roof and carved, moulded surface decoration, which they adopted.

We know little about the early Muslim architecture of Gaur and Pandua where the Muslim kings had raised religious monuments and buildings. The far-famed Adina mosque was built by Sikandar Shah (1358-59) at Pandua. It is an immense open quadrangle, more than twice as long as it is broad, bounded on all sides by arched screens and arched ways identical in all respects to others; monotony is avoided by a single archway rising above others.

39
The Asoka Pillar at Kotla Firuz Shah

40
Jama Masjid, Ahmedabad



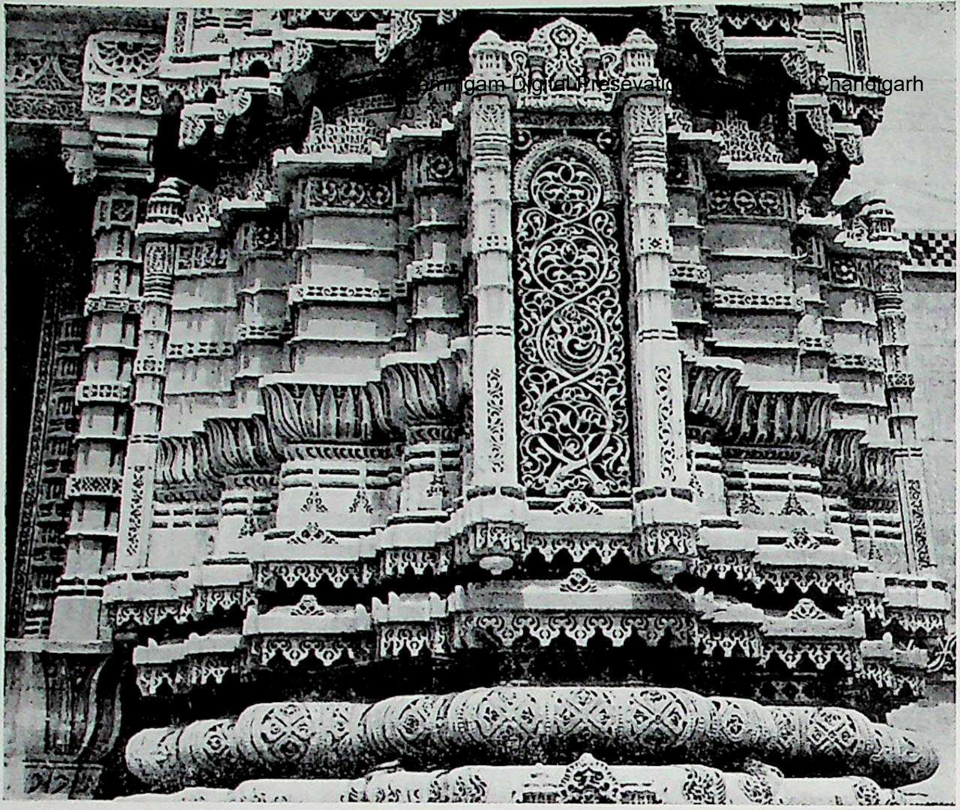


41
Mausoleum of Shaikh Ahmad at Sarkhej, Ahmedabad

The cloisters divided into 375 bays also followed the same pattern. Another interesting monument at Pandua is the Eklakhi tomb assigned to Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah (*c.* 1409-1438 A.D.). Among the interesting buildings at Gaur may be mentioned the Dakhal Darwaza built in 1459. It is a superb example of what can be achieved in brick and terracotta. The Tantipara Masjid at Gaur (*c.* 1470 A.D.) is supposed to be the finest monument at that place and this opinion is justified as far as superb ornaments are concerned.

When Ala-ud-din Khalji invaded Gujarat he found beautiful architecture flourishing. This style was marked by breadth and spaciousness combined with elegance. The foundation of the local Muslim style of Gujarat was laid in the 14th century, but it could not fully develop till the Ahmadshahi dynasty. Ahmad Shah built the city of Ahmedabad and erected there such famous monuments as the Jama Masjid (Fig. 40) and Tin Darwaza. The latter served as the principal entrance to the outer courtyard of the palace. This gateway is noted for its perfectly framed delicate archway.

Among the monuments of Muhammad Shah II (1442-57 A.D.) the mausoleum of Shaikh Ahmad at Sarkhej is the largest of its kind in Gujarat and is distinguished for its chaste simplicity

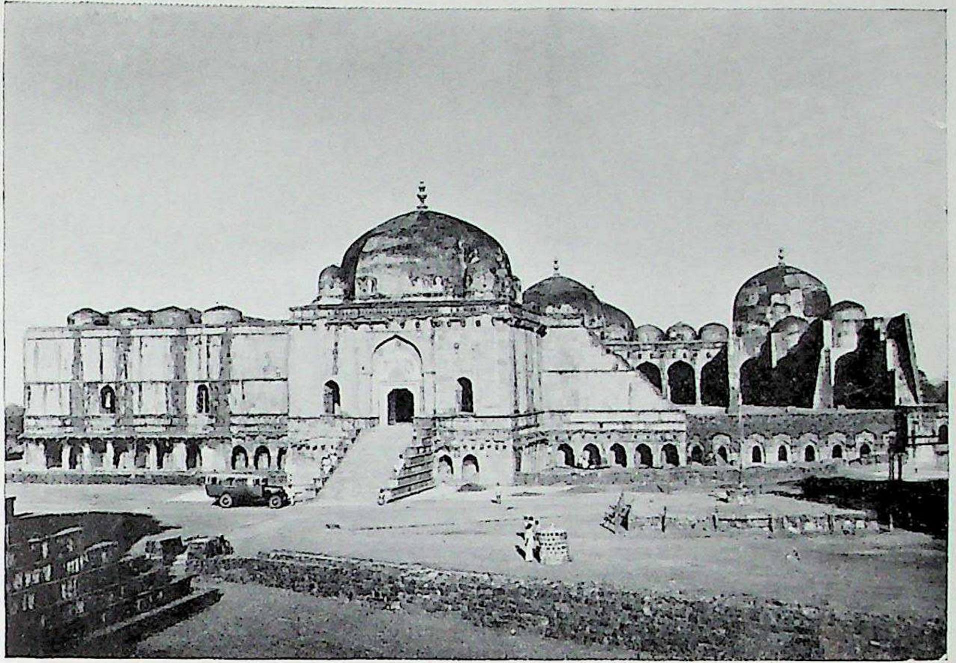


42
Rani Sipri's Mosque, Ahmedabad

and as a pillared hall it is difficult to improve upon it (Fig. 41).

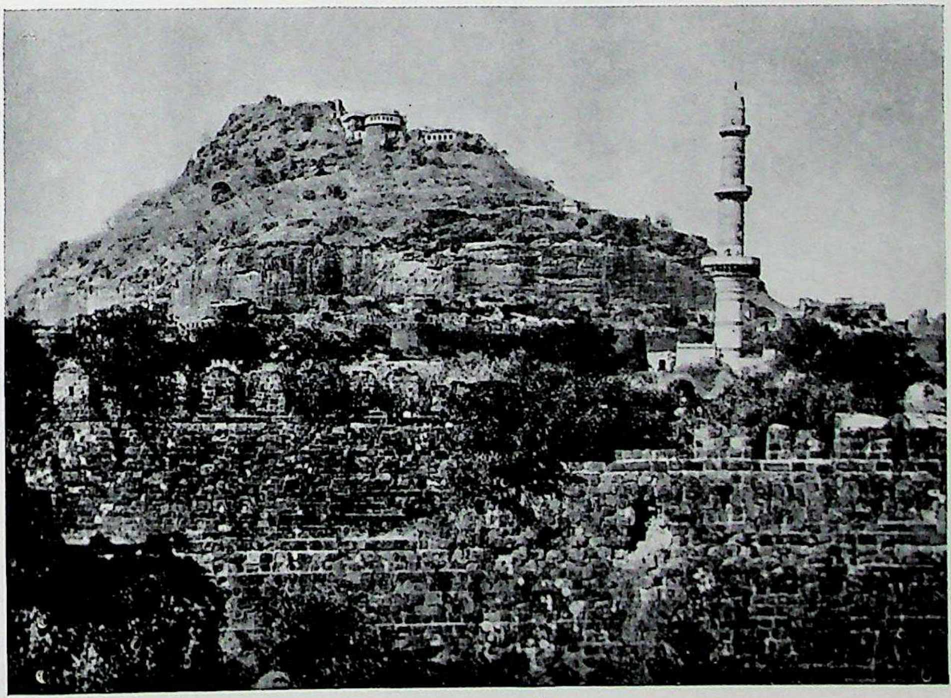
The reign of Muhammad Beghra (1459-1511 A.D.) is distinguished for the magnificence of its architecture. He built the new cities of Junagadh, Kheda and Champaner. He further beautified Ahmedabad with new fortifications, spacious roads and splendid edifices. The outstanding among the monuments at Champaner is the great Jama Masjid which rivals in beauty any mosque in Gujarat. At Ahmedabad the remains of his palace at Sarkhej with its stepped ghats and terraces, its pillared verandahs and bastioned windows attract our attention. Attention may also be drawn to Rani Sipri's Mosque (Fig. 42) which according to Fergusson is one of the most exquisite structures in the world and is distinguished for its jewel-like carvings. The traceries may be seen in Sidi Sayyid Mosque to their perfection.

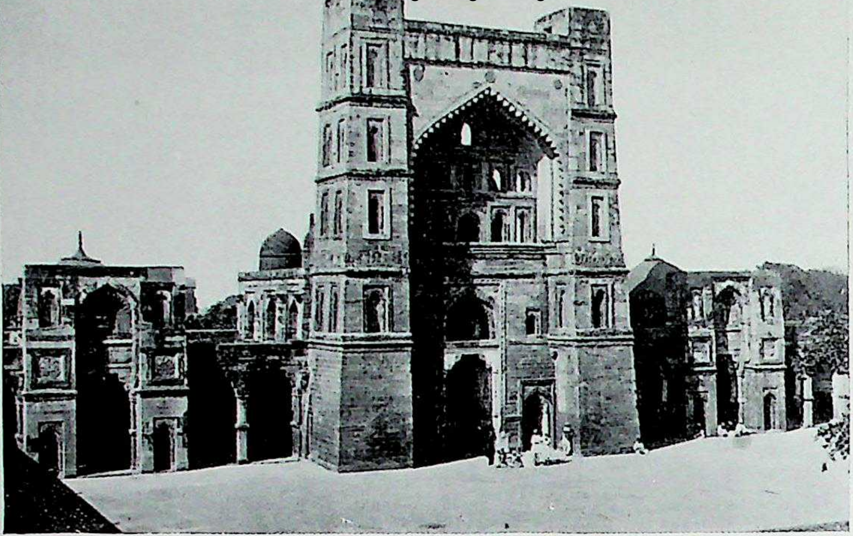
In the earlier states of its development the local style of Dhar and Mandu was based on the architecture of the Imperial Capital, but it was also distinguished by its impressive size and peculiarity of construction. The plan of Hindola Mahal at Mandu is 'T' shaped, the stem of the 'T' forming the Darbar Hall and the cross a group of smaller apartments in



43
Jama Masjid, Mandu (Madhya Bharat)

44
The Daulatabad Fort

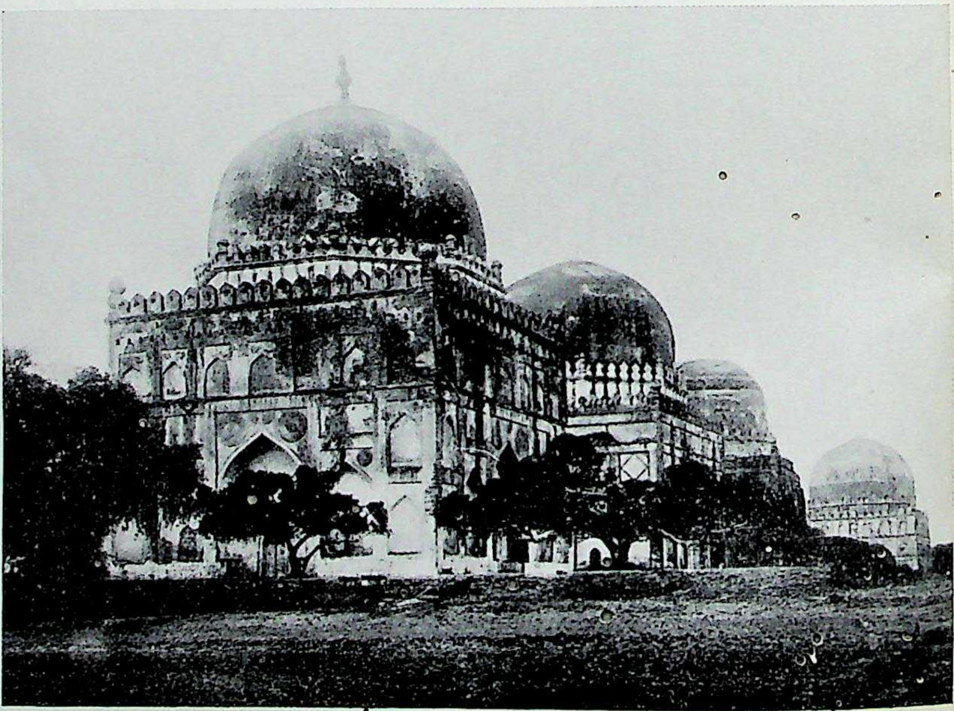




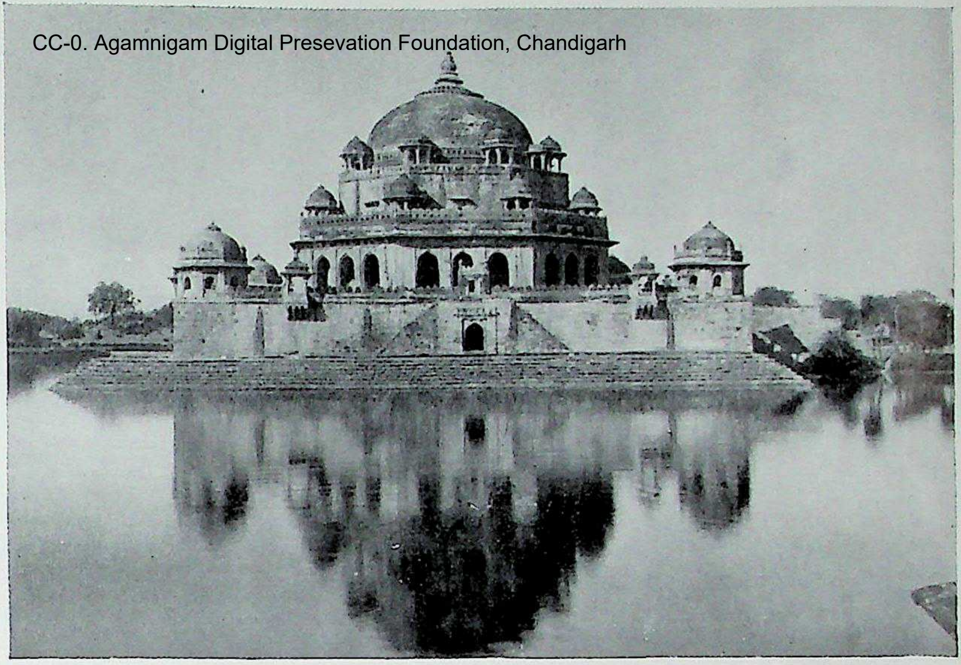
45
The Atala Mosque, Jaunpur

two storeys intended for the Zanana. A fine example of Sultanate architecture is the Jama Masjid at Mandu (Fig. 43).

There are some beautiful monuments at Jaunpur not far from Banaras built by Sharqi kings. The best monument in Jaunpur style is the Atala Masjid built as far back as 1377. Its architectural features are directly copied from the mosque of the Tughluk period, though it is more decorated; its gate-



46
The tomb of Ahmad Wali Shah at Bidar



47
Mausoleum of Sher Shah at Sasaram, Bihar

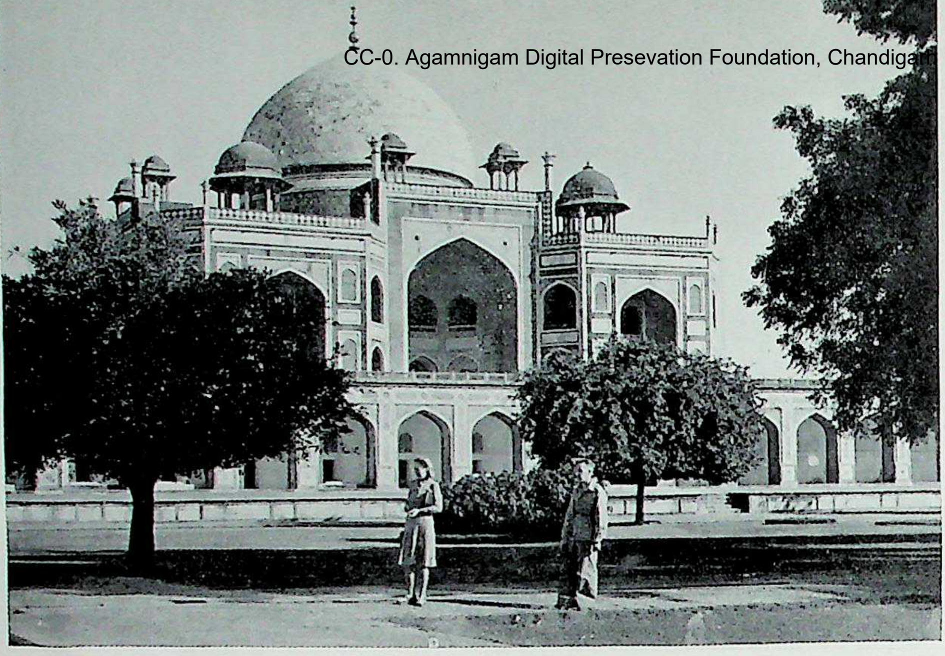
ways were designed to match the propylons (Fig. 45).

Turning from Northern India to the Deccan we find that as long as the Deccan formed part and parcel of the Delhi Empire the architecture was modelled on the Tughluk or Khalji style. Even after the Deccan had re-established its independence in 1347 the Bahmanis followed the Imperial style of Delhi in which European and Persian influences are evident. Attention may be drawn to the fortress at Daulatabad (Fig. 44) built by Mohammad Tughluk in 1339.

The famous Jama Masjid (1367 A.D.) at Gulbarga has two special characteristics, the broad squat arches of the cloisters and the courtyard covered by small domes carried on arched bays.

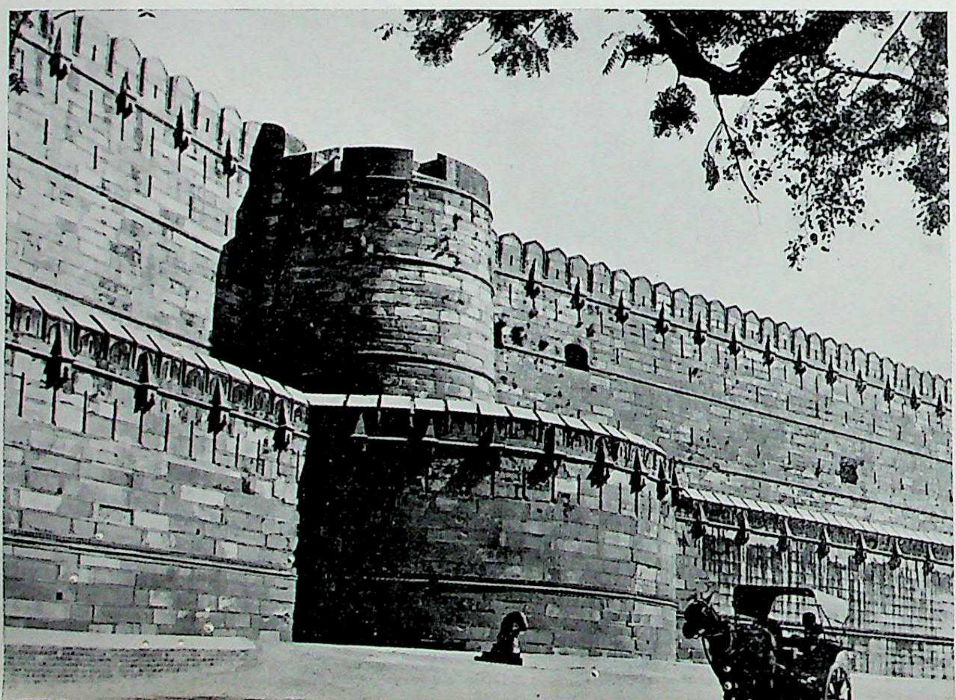
Among the monuments at Bidar the finest is the tomb of Ahmad Wali Shah, the interior of which is decorated with paintings in floral style and enriched by bands of inscriptions painted in gold on deep blue or vermilion ground (Fig. 46). Another notable monument is the College erected at Bidar in 1472 by Mahmud Gawan. It was a three storeyed building containing a mosque, a library, lecture halls, professors' quarters and students' cubicles looking on to an open courtyard.

It is a well-known fact that the Mughal period has given to Indian architecture some of its finest gems. It is, however, notable that both Babar and Humayun were unable to contribute anything to the growth of Mughal architecture. It is, however, significant that even in those days of storm and stress the Sayyid-Afghan architecture contributed some fine monuments. Attention may be drawn here to the

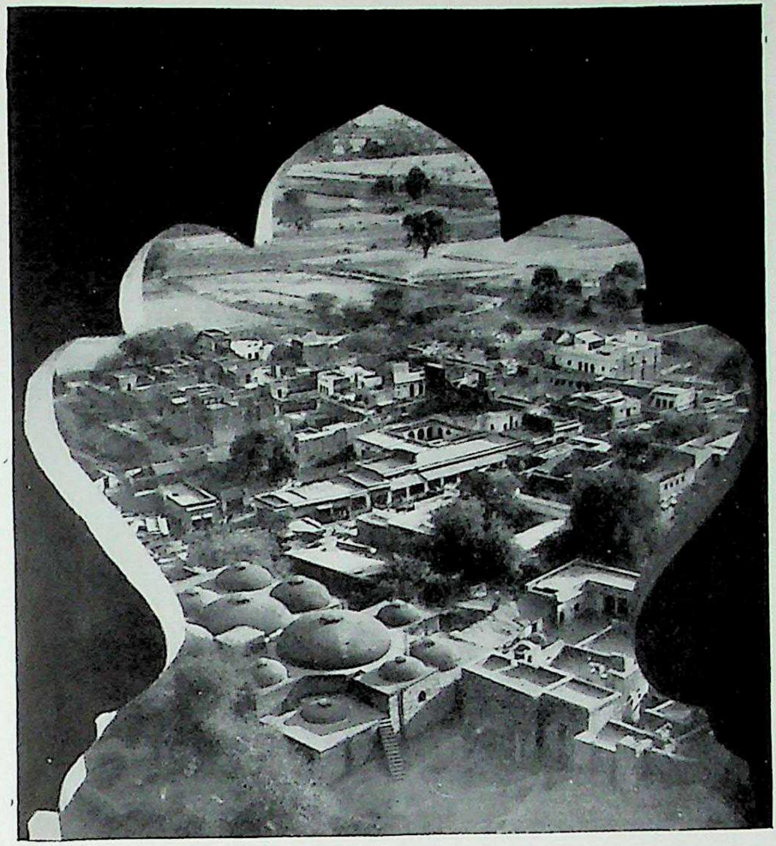


48
Humayun's tomb at Delhi

famous mausoleum of Sher Shah at Sasaram which is an everlasting tribute to the genius of that great ruler and the skill of its architect (Fig. 47). The tomb rises from a large rectangular tank forming a grand pyramidal mass of diminishing tiers crowned by semi-spherical dome. The plinth and terrace are square in plan though the mausoleum itself is octagonal. A flight



49
The Agra Fort



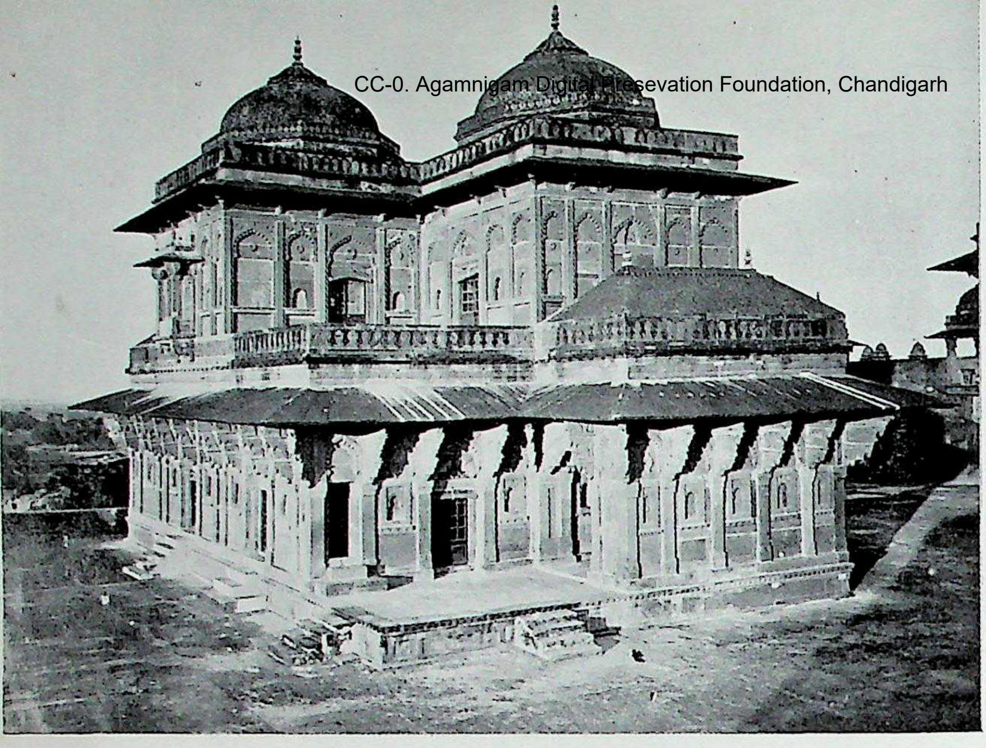
50
Akbar's capital—Fatehpur Sikri

of steps at entrances are provided on each side of the terrace. The interior consists of a big vaulted hall. Access is obtained to the mausoleum by a causeway.

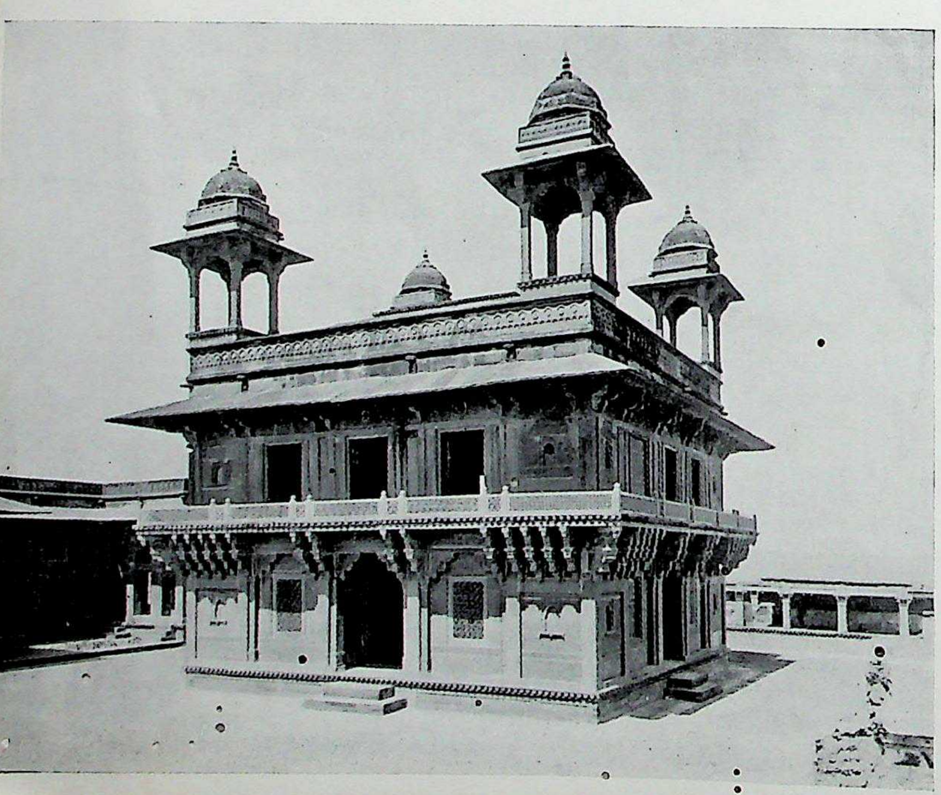
Another remarkable monument of Sher Shah's period is the Qila-Kunha Masjid. The chief beauty of the mosque lies in the arrangement of its facades divided into five arched bays. The mouldings are decorated with inlays.

The accession of Akbar the Great gave a great impetus to building activity. At about 1564 Humayun's tomb at Delhi was built (Fig. 48). One of its attractive features is its situation in a large park-like enclosure. Its square plan on the terrace is recessed in the middle of each side. Each facade contains a doorway. The great dome is mounted on a high drum. The interior consists of a big hall with side chambers connected with one another by corridors and galleries.

After Humayun's tomb, however, the most important building projects of Akbar's period were the palace fortresses begun by Akbar at Agra (Fig. 49) and Lahore. The fort of Agra is distinguished by its magnificent walls in red stone entered by two gateways of which



51
Birbal's House, Fatehpur Sikri

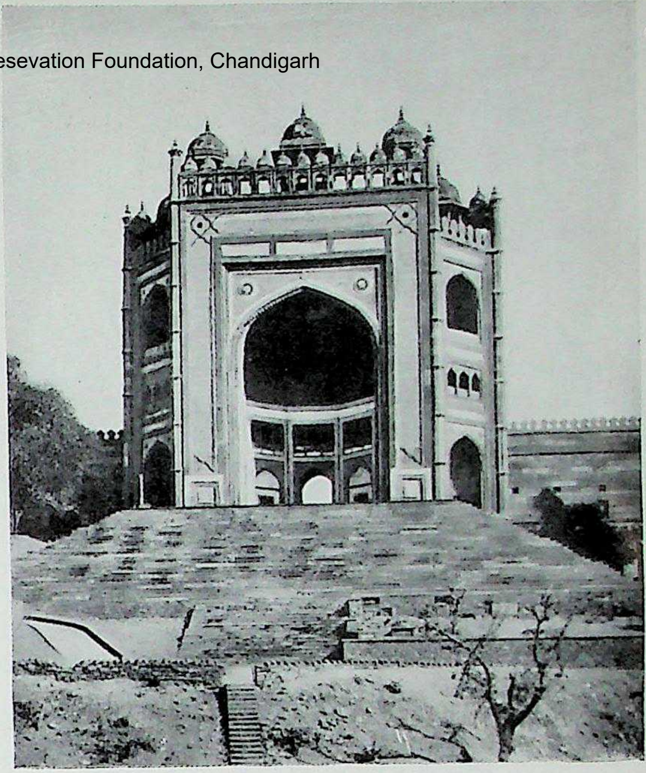


52
Diwan-i-Khas,
Fatehpur Sikri

the Hathi Pol is beautifully designed. Among the buildings erected inside may be mentioned the Akbari Mahal and Jahangiri Mahal. Both the palaces are designed on the usual plan of central square courtyard with ranges of double-storeyed rooms on each of the four sides. They are distinguished for their decoration.

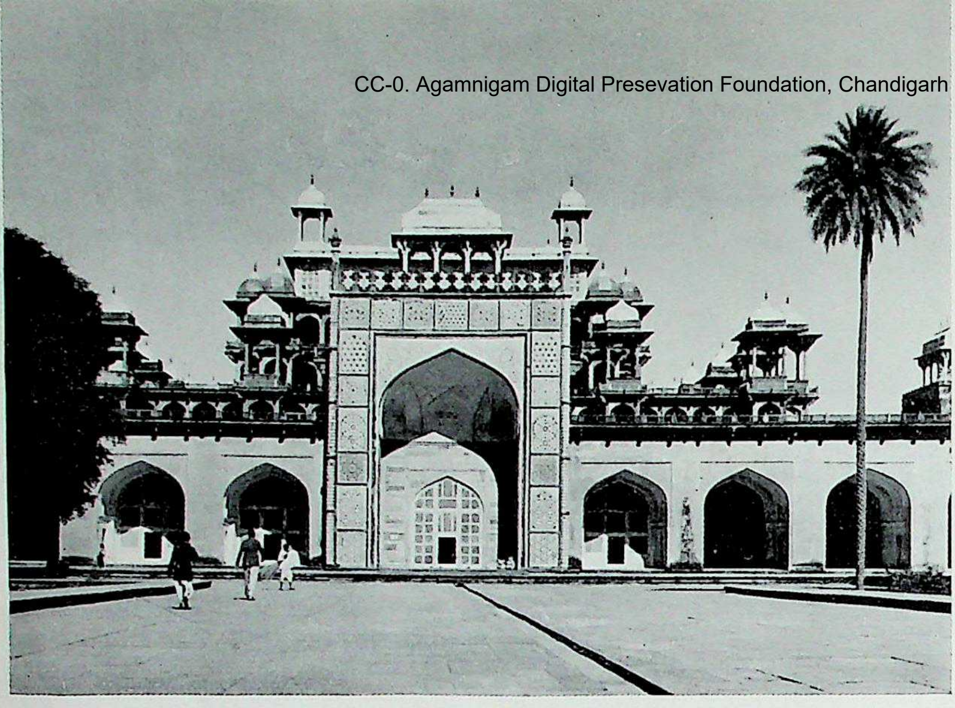
The architecture of Fatehpur Sikri (Fig. 50), 26 miles from Agra, bears testimony to the genius of Akbar as a builder. The enclosing wall was very substantially built and provided with nine gates. One of the principal entrances is the Agra gate. Within the enclosure lies Jodh Bai's palace in which Hindu influence is clearly visible. Its double storeyed rooms face inward on the quadrangle and it is provided with a handsome gateway and balconies. There is a double storeyed pavilion known as Hawakhana, 'House of Air'. The decorative elements have been copied from the architecture of Western India.

Among the buildings of Fatehpur Sikri attention may also be drawn to Birbal's house (Fig. 51) and Diwan-i-Khas (Fig. 52). Birbal's house attracts our attention on account of the exuberance of its carved decoration, and the peculiar construction of its roof. The interior of the Diwan-i-Khas consists of a lofty room divided by a gallery on brackets with other narrow hanging galleries thrown diagonally from corner to corner. At the meeting point of the diagonal galleries a circular platform has been inserted, the entire construction being supported on an immense cluster of brackets forming the capital of a column. In this wonderful hall Akbar listened to the discourse of the religious disputants from all over his empire.



53
Buland Darwaza, Fatehpur Sikri

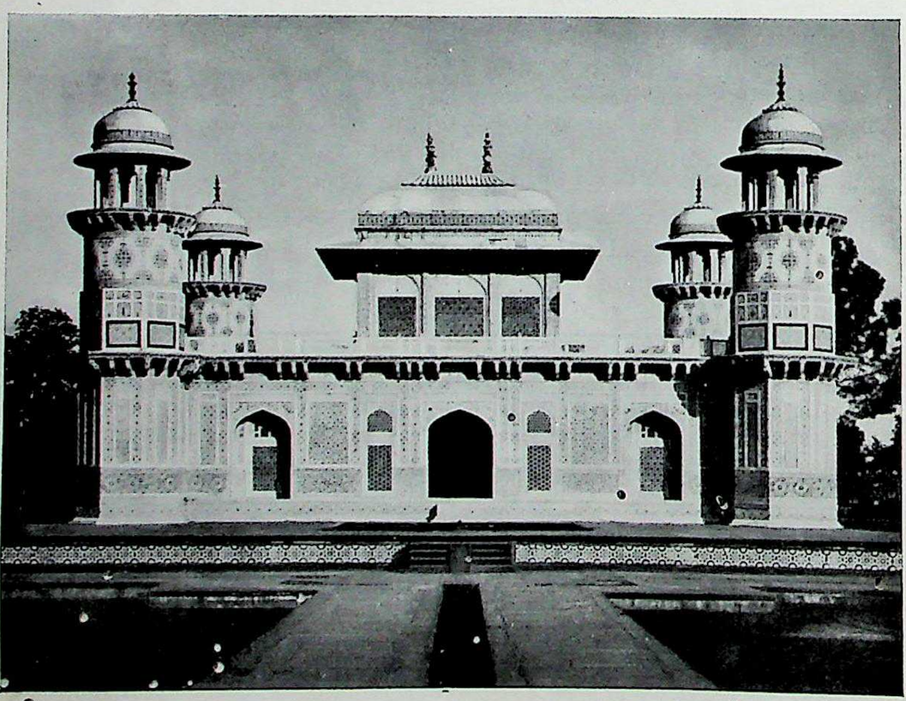
The most imposing building at Sikri is the Jama Masjid. It is symmetrical in plan, the courtyard being entered by gateways on three sides. The sanctuary hall is a self-contained place of worship provided with a beautiful facade and a portico in the centre and arcaded wings extending on each side. Above the facade rise three domes. The finest feature of the mosque is, however, the Buland Darwaza (Fig. 53), distinguished by its imposing height, bold projecting façade, gradually diminished in its



54
Mausoleum of Akbar, Sikandra, Agra

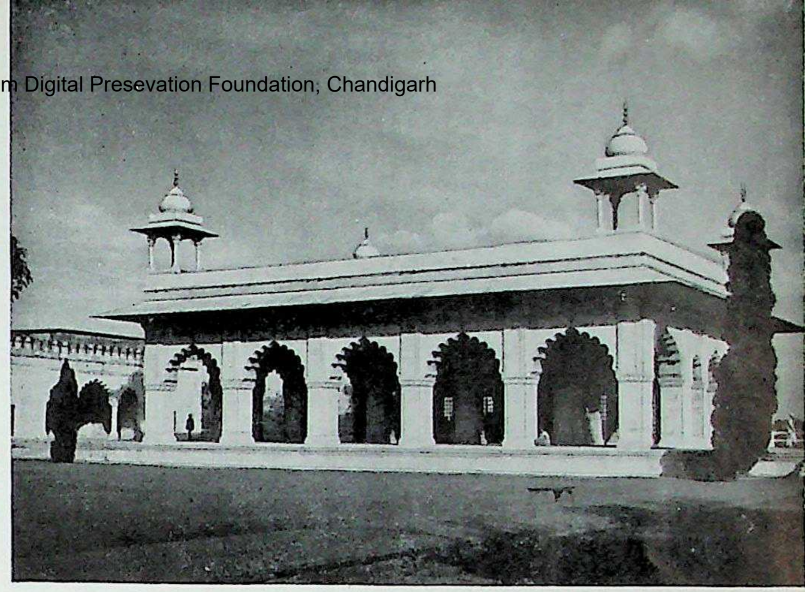
parts until it is finally reduced to a doorway of ordinary size.

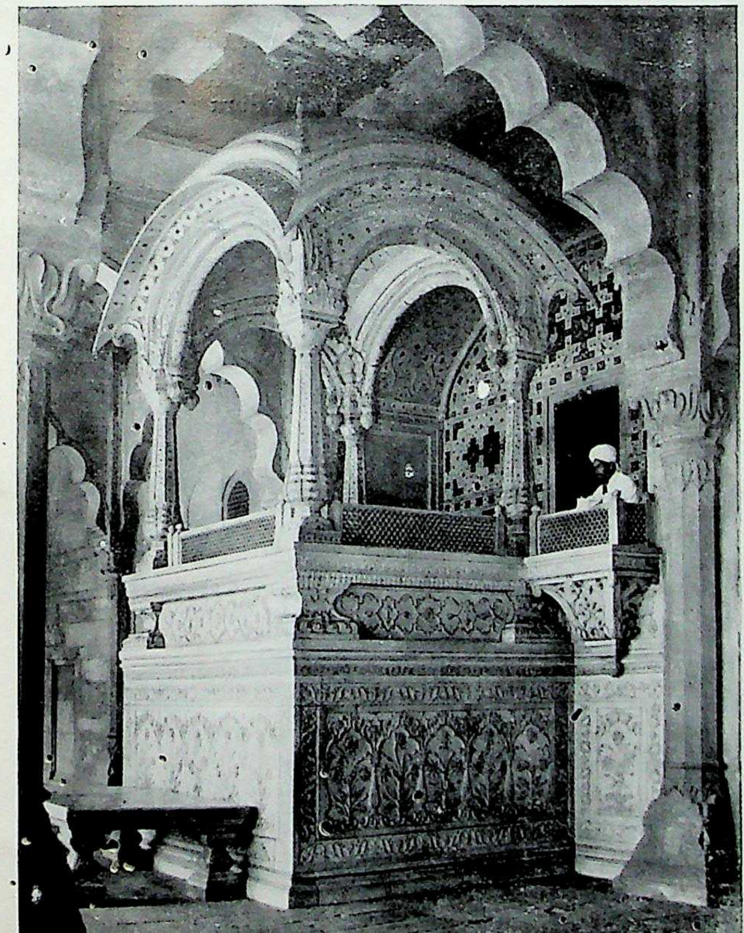
Jahangir was not a great builder but he laid out several beautiful gardens, of which Shalimar Bagh near Srinagar, Kashmir, may be mentioned. Among the famous monuments of his period, the tomb of Akbar is one



55
The tomb of Itmad-ud-daulah

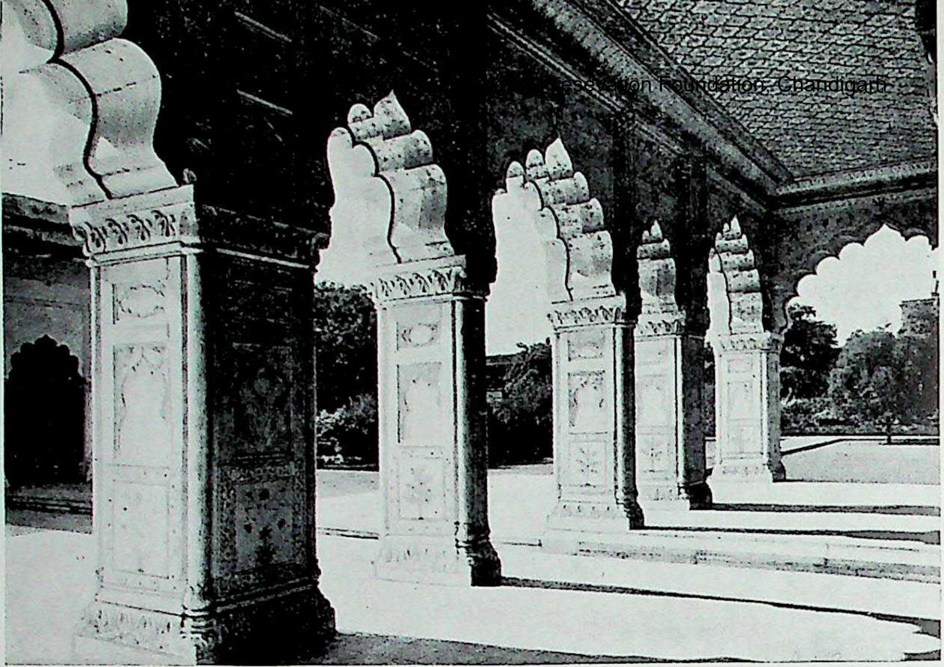
56
Diwan-i-Khas,
Red Fort, Delhi





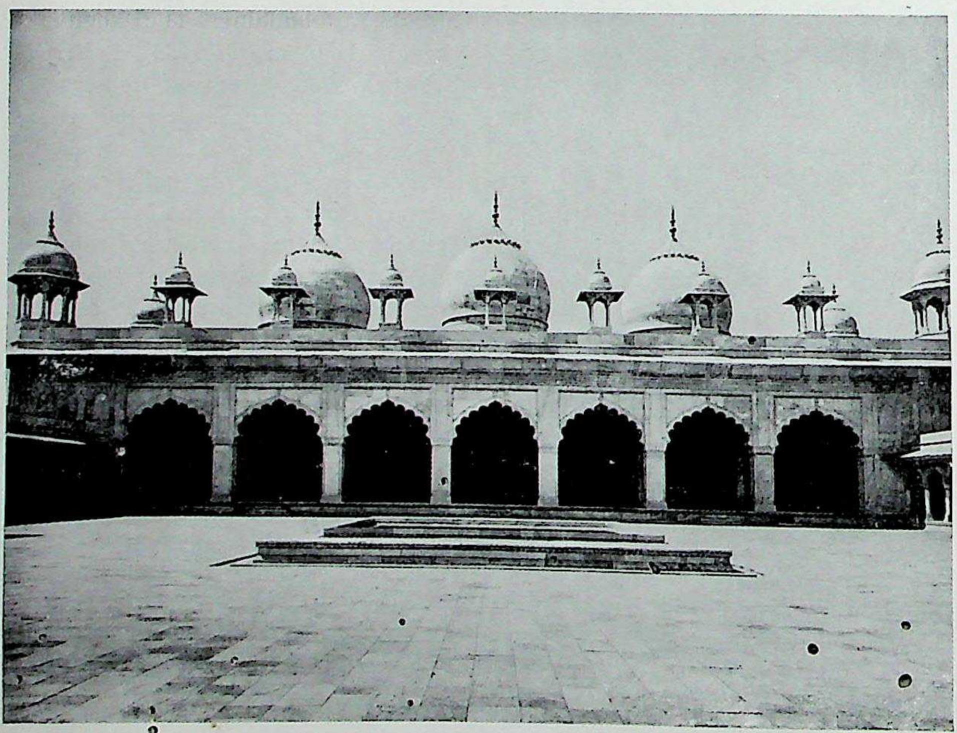
(Fig. 54). The building is a huge structure consisting of five diminishing terraces as they ascend. Its final storey is distinguished by its fine finish. Jahangir's tomb at Lahore is also an impressive building. The tomb of Itmad-ud-daulah (Fig. 55), father of Nurmahal, the famous consort of Jahangir, bears witness to the refined taste of the queen. There is no other building like it in the entire range of Mughal architecture and its distinguishing feature is its chaste decoration. The mausoleum is constructed in white marbles which are beautifully decorated with inlay work. As a matter of fact the decoration in this tomb is the harbinger of the sumptuous marble pavilions and pietra dura work of Shah Jahan.

57
The throne at Diwan-i-Khas,
Red Fort, Delhi

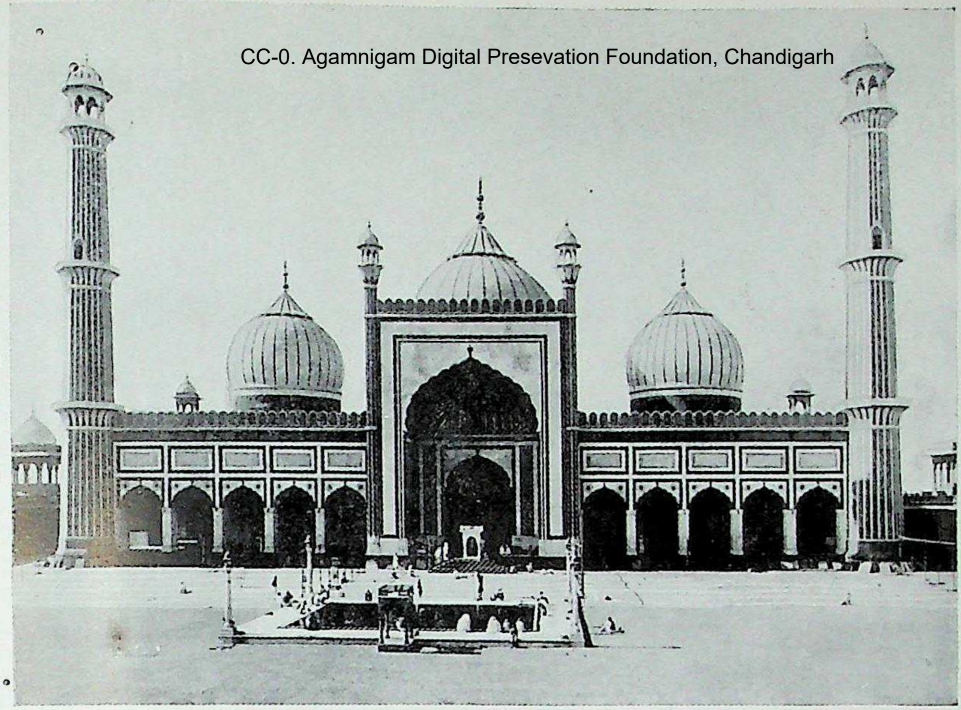


58
Marble colonnade in Diwan-i-Khas, Red Fort, Delhi

It may be said with justification that Shah Jahan found buildings in red stone and turned them into marble which was supplied in unlimited quantity by the quarries of Makrana in Rajputana. This change into a new material gave a new sensibility to the building art and decoration, and pietra dura greater



59
Moti Masjid, Agra

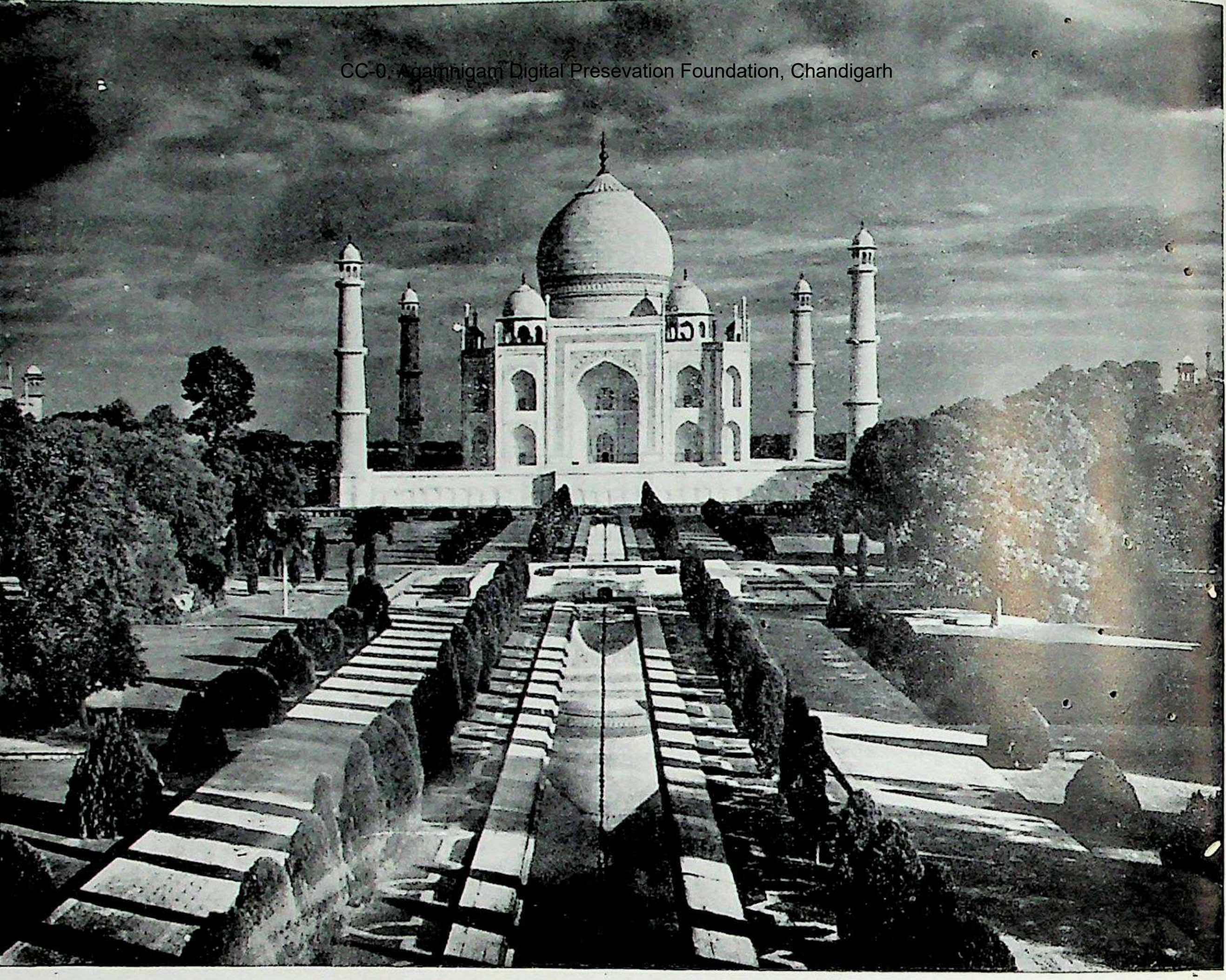


60
Jama Masjid, Delhi

subtlety. Shah Jahan introduced a new feature in architecture in the shape of cusped arch. He demolished structures north of the Jahangir Mahal in Agra Fort and their place was taken by such magnificent edifices as the Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas, Moti Masjid, etc. What could be more noble than the Hall of the Diwan-i-Khas with its double rows of columns. The Moti Masjid (Fig. 59) erected in 1654 with its flawless quality of material and noble disposition of its architectural elements at once attracts our attention.

Not satisfied with his building activities Shah Jahan decided to build a new city at Delhi. The citadel consisted of three entrances, barracks for the guards, accommodation for those attached to the court, darbar halls, royal store rooms, kitchens, stables, etc. The royal residence is the most magnificent of all, its plan being arranged in rectangles and squares. All the palaces were provided with beautiful gardens and with separate pavilions divided into bays with massive pillars and their room supported by foliated arches. All interior surfaces are decorated either with inlay, low relief carvings or patterns in colour and gold. Water was brought to the fort by a canal from the Jamuna and there it was diverted into the fountains.

The famous Jama Masjid at Delhi was begun in 1644 and was finished in 1658 (Fig. 60). It is distinguished by its dignified and impressive appearance. Its noble gates with an endless flight of steps and domes are nobly disposed. The Jama Masjid built at Agra in the



61
The Taj Mahal

same period, though following the plan of its counterpart at Delhi, with its rippling succession of kiosks gives a noble aspect to this building.

The Taj Mahal (Fig. 61) has been rightly described as one of the finest monuments ever raised to honour the memory of the dead. The royal consort Mumtaz Mahal, during her lifetime, lived in the Khas Mahal, one of the noblest buildings of the time and even after her death. She reposed in a memorial of matchless beauty. Truly this mausoleum is an everlasting tribute to the genius of its builder and the aesthetic sense of the emperor.

Not only the carvers and decorators from all parts of India were summoned but calligraphists, decorators and builders from Baghdad, Bukhara, Shiraz and

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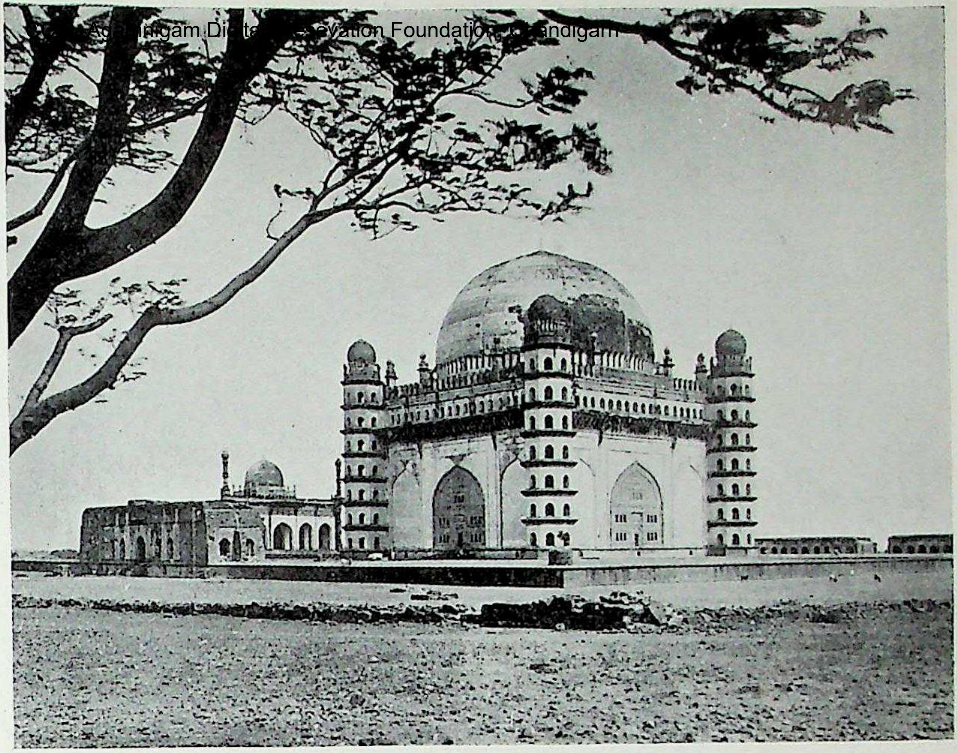
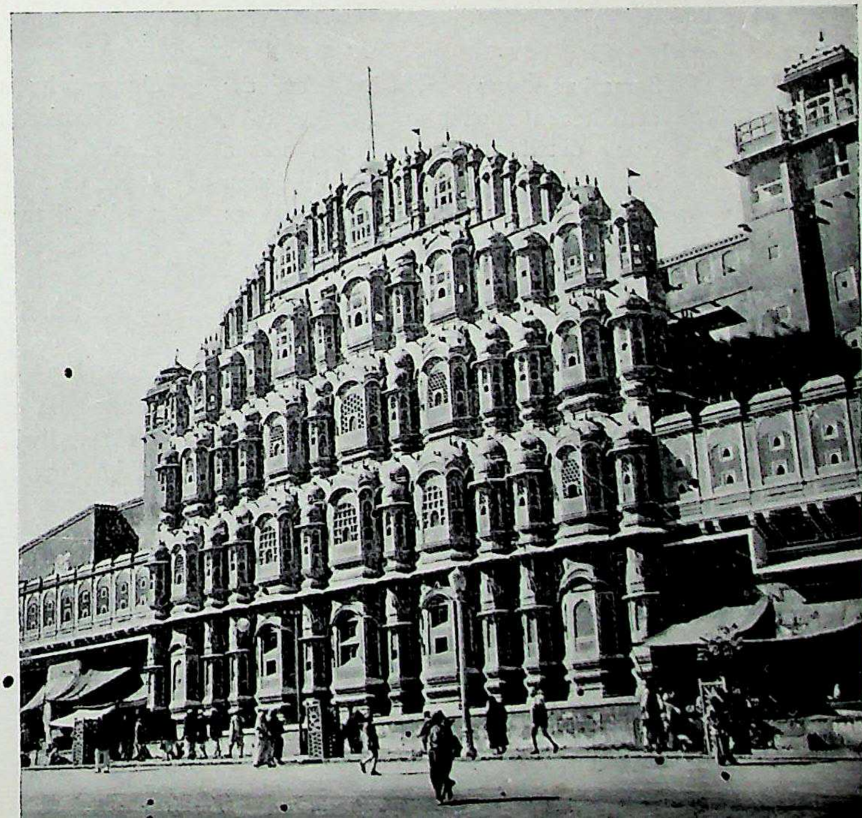
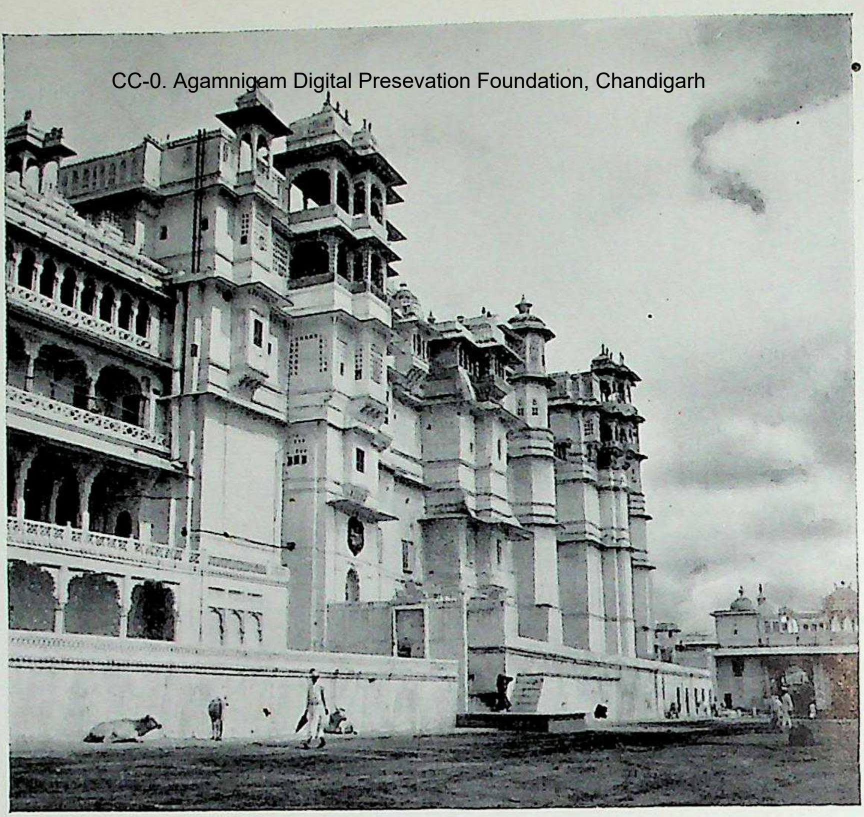
62
Gol Gumbaz,
Bijapur



63
Hawa Mahal,
Jaipur





64

The Maharana's palace, Udaipur

Samarkand were invited. Before the actual construction was undertaken, every detail was worked out and a beautiful site was selected and the plan for the garden laid. At the northern end of the enclosure is a wide terrace enclosing the mausoleum occupying the centre with a mosque and another building on either side to balance the design. The mausoleum rises almost abruptly from the high marble terrace. The plan is square and its elevation is divided approximately into two parts of equal heights. Its crowning glory is the great dome. Its interior has a crypt below, and a vaulted tomb-chamber above. As regards the decoration outside, the principal embellishment is obtained by arabesques in pietra dura scroll work, diapers, sprays of lilies and other floral forms. There is little doubt that both men and nature have combined to give a thing of supreme beauty to posterity.

Aurangzeb also added a few pretentious buildings, but compared with their predecessors they are decidedly of inferior workmanship. The mausoleum of the wife of Aurangzeb at Aurangabad is an inferior copy of the Taj Mahal.

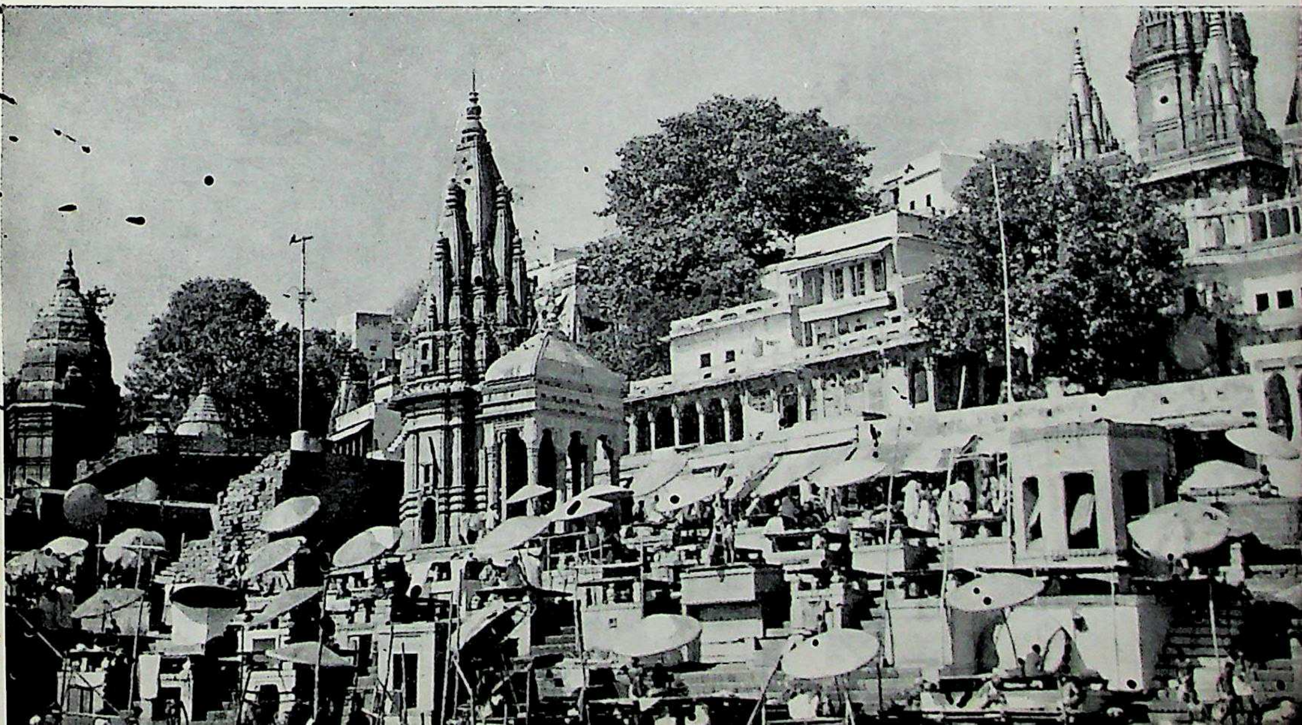
Different in character from the architecture of the Mughals, a distinct architectural style prevailed at Bijapur. This independent style owes its existence to the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur.

Claiming Turkish origin, the Adil Shahis introduced a new foreign element in the local architecture with success. The famous Gol Gumbaz (Fig. 62), tomb of Muhammad Adil Shah (1627-58), is an immense mausoleum. The tomb encloses a chamber of vast size and noble proportions, and its most outstanding features are octagonal turrets and the ponderous bracketed cornice below the parapet. The arrangement of the arches is also very ingenious. The sombre beauty of the Gol Gumbaz, however, contrasts with Mihtar Mahal which forms a gateway to the mosque. Its projecting balcony window arrests our attention.

Reverting to an earlier period, Ibrahim Rauza is a beautiful monument and it contains the tomb of Ibrahim Adil Shah II and a mosque. Both are arcaded edifices with wide eaves on carved brackets and ornamental minarets and each is surmounted with a bulbous dome. Their carved decoration is clearly the outcome of the futile imagination of the craftsmen of Bijapur.

After the downfall of the Mughal Empire in the 18th century Indian architecture naturally suffered. But, fortunately, it received patronage from the Rajput princes, who built some beautiful palaces. Mention may be made of Hawa Mahal at Jaipur (Fig. 63) and the Maharana's palace at Udaipur (Fig. 64). The famous Nawabs of Oudh built many mausoleums, but architecturally they are not of much merit. Between the middle of the 18th century and 19th century the ghats of Banaras were built, which offer a unique sight to the visitors (No. 65). Indian architecture even in the late 19th century followed the ancient pattern, though unfortunately its architectural value is much reduced.

65
The Ghats of Banaras



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